A DISCOURSE Concerning The BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

By the Author of

The Duty of Man,

Laid down in Expreſs words of Scripture.

1 CHRON. 16. 29.

Worſhip the Lord in the Beauty of Holineſs.

Imprimatur.

July 18th, 1678.

GUIL. SILL.

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THE CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

Of the Nature of Holineſs. page 7.

CHAP. II.

Of the Rule of Holineſs. 11

CHAP. III.

Motives and inducements to the practice of Holineſs. 48

Sect. 1.

The noble pattern of Holineſs. 49

Sect. 2.

Holineſs the condition of future happineſs. 74

Sect. 3.

Holineſs the onely ſafe way to eſcape the wrath to come. 82

Sect. 4.

Holineſs the main deſigne of the Goſpel, and the end of all Chriſts ſufferings. 87

Sect. 5.

Holineſs the moſt proper and effectual means for obtaining length of days. 91

Sect. 6.

Holineſs that which makes men honourable; Vice rendering men mean and ignoble. 96

Sect. 7.

Holineſs attended with the moſt ſolid and real Pleaſures. 106

Sect. 8.

Holineſs accompanied with peace. 114

Sect. 9.

Holineſs the beſt evidence of true Wiſdom and real Worth and Courage. 119

Sect. 10.

Holineſs univerſally profitable, and above

above all things most advantageous. 124

CHAP. IV.

Frivolous Cavils and Objections removed. 142

THE

THE INTRODUCTION.

MAn in his original condition, when he first came out of the hands of his Maker, was a very noble and venerable Creature, adorned with many peculiar excellencies; and as the Psalmist observes, *Onely made a little lower than glorious Angels:* But of all his perfections, *Holiness*, as it was the principal and most oriental, so did it also give a beauty and lustre to the rest; It made his Authority and Power lovely and desirable, his Wisdom and Knowledge venerable, and every other attribute, which without this is terrible and dreadful, to be comely and praise-worthy. *This* was that single perfection that raised Man above the beasts

that periſh, and made him Heavens great favourite and darling; which if it had been carefully preſerved, had undoubtedly ſecured our firſt Parents in Paradiſe, and prevented that dreadful calamity that hath ſeized upon their Poſterity.

But alas! how are we fallen from Heaven to Earth? from a Paradiſe of pure pleaſures, to a miſerable and painful Priſon? We have loſt that divine Image that was impreſſed upon Man in his primitive ſtate, which indeed compleated, and alone preſerved its beauty and comelineſs; and with it have alſo loſt every thing that did then contribute to make us happy; and are now become vile and abominable, and as miſerable as we were formerly happy.

How much a ſerious view of that primitive felicity man in his innocent ſtate enjoyed, would contribute to plant in us a holy life, I know not: but I am ſure it could not but mightily inhance the value of *Holineſs*, and make it lovely and deſirable. *That* man that reflects upon the diſmal miſeries he is expoſed to in this lapſed eſtate, to what an infinite number of inexpreſſible evils, of inſupportable pains he lies open; how he is hurried from a ſtate of perfect bliſs, to a woful

hell

hell of extream torments: How exceedingly amazing is this? The very Poet could ſay, *Miſerum eſt fuiſſe beatum.*

But, God knows, this is but very ſeldom (and if ever, but faintly) reflected upon; we are (to our ſhame) become contented ſlaves, and ſatisfied to bear Fetters and Chains; we continually live in the midſt of all evil, never enjoy a moments ſolace or comfort: notwithſtanding of which, like mad-men we are content with our ſtate, and like the Sow take pleaſure to puddle in the mire.

And although that ſame diffuſive and boundleſs goodneſs that firſt breathed in us the breath of life, and framed us in his own likeneſs and image, again pitied us in our low eſtate, and provided the moſt valuable and Soveraign remedie to recover us from this mortal diſeaſe; though he has procured a compleat Ranſom to liberate us from the inſupportable ſlavery and tyranny of ſin; has offered to reſtore our former beautie, to repoſſeſs us of that happineſs we had loſt, and to make us again Favourites and Freemen; yet how inſolently have we rejected this kinde offer? how impiouſly have we cut thoſe cords of love aſunder, and refuſe to be healed?

'Tis, indeed, matter of great ſadneſs to conſider the lofty and intolerable affronts that are now caſt upon Holineſs; how men are arrived at that pitch of impietie, to ſcorn and deride Religion, which former ages were at ſome pains to advance; as if Holineſs were inconſiſtent with the principles of Generoſity, and onely becoming mean and moroſe ſpirits.

How tranſcendent a folly and madneſs this is, will eaſily appear by what I ſhall afterwards lay down. Me thinks the naked repreſentation of Holineſs, ſhould be motive enough (if not to court it, yet) to engage men to correct their unreaſonable prejudices they entertain againſt it; and even force its greateſt Antagoniſts to become its Advocates. But alas! vice hath caſt ſuch a dark ſhadow upon mens Judgements, that they are become as unfit Judges of its beauty, as blinde men are of colours; otherwiſe we might yet expect to ſee contemned Vertue much more in vogue than ever Vice was.

To excite our deſires, Scripture has repreſented it under the moſt comely dreſs, has diſcovered its beauty and excellencie, and recommended it by the moſt endearing motives which are apt to work both upon our hope and fear: *Upon our hope,*

hope, by propoſing an infinitely-valuable reward to the righteous, beſides the preſent advantages that attend it. *Upon our fear*, by opening to our view *the powers of the world to come*, and diſcovering the inſupportable miſery that the damned ſuffer *day and night*; ſo that if men would but ſo far actuate their Reaſon, as ſoberly to conſult their own intereſt and happineſs, I doubt not but this alone ſhould be motive enough to excite them to the practiſe of Holineſs, and ſcare them from thoſe ways of ſin *that lead down to the chambers of death.*

It would make (one would think) the greateſt Senſualiſt to relinquiſh the momentary pleaſures he enjoys here, to be poſſeſt of thoſe eternal joys that the pure in ſpirit ſhall reap *in the Kingdom of their Father:* and the moſt hardened and impregnable ſinner tremble, to think of *dwelling with devouring flames.*

Now the onely infallible way to attain thoſe cœleſtial felicities, and to evite the miſerable conſequences of Vice, and thoſe pains and tortures that it expoſeth its votaries to, is to abandon every luſt, be it never ſo impetuous, and to *cleanſe our ſelves* (as the Apoſtle adviſeth us) *from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, and to*

perfect holineſs in the fear of God.

For the better directing our preſent inquiſition, I ſhall *firſt* briefly repreſent the *nature* of true *Holineſs*, and ſhew the *beauty* and excellencie of it. *Secondly*, I ſhall diſcourſe of its *rule*, and more particularly diſcover the ſeveral branches of *Holineſs*. *Thirdly*, I ſhall propound ſeveral *motives* and *inducements* to engage men to the practiſe of *Holineſs*; and indeed this is what I chiefly intend to inſiſt upon. *Fourthly*, I ſhall remove all thoſe *Cavils* and *Objections* that are urged againſt *Holineſs*. And *Laſtly*, conclude with ſome ſhort *Reflections* and Inferences.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of the nature of Holineſs.

I Intend not here to deſcend to the conſideration of every particular branch of *holineſs*, but to diſcourſe of it in the general, as it is the *combination of all Chriſtian vertues:* and as it is thus conſidered, I need not, I think, in the deſcription of it, accurately ſtudy all thoſe Logical rules Philoſophers require in a good definition. For my part, it fully enough ſatisfies me to know, that *holineſs* is *a conformity to the Divine Law*, and *a hearty and ſincere compliance with thoſe original dictates of humane nature, and the Commands revealed in ſacred Writ.*

So long as man remained obedient to the Laws of his Maker, his *holineſs* was untainted, and his Beauty and primitive congenite comelineſs continued; but by his woful apoſtacy he loſt that noble embelliſhment of his nature, which did indeed give a grace to all his other accompliſhments, and is now become ugly and deformed. *Holineſs* and *purity of Spirit* are different words, but of the ſame ſignification, and are promiſcuouſly uſed in Scripture to expreſs the ſame

thing. Oppoſite to which are *Sin* and *Uncleanneſs: Sin* being that which contaminates the Soul, and robs it of that beauty which formerly did of right belong to it.

Althongh 'tis not one particular good action that denominates a man *holy*; yet every wilful aberration from, and tranſgreſſion of the Law, conſtitutes man a ſinner, and makes him liable to the demerit of the offence. Whoſoever therefore intends *to perfect holineſs*, muſt (according to the Apoſtle's advice) *cleanſe himſelf from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, abſtain from every appearance of evil*, and ſincerely endeavour to perform all good actions.

In a word, *Holineſs* in its general notion, is *the comprehenſive ſum of the moral Law*; and may be very aptly deſcribed to be *a ceaſing from evil, and doing good*; which in this lapſed eſtate conſiſts in the ſincerity of our intentions and actions, and ſhall be perfected when *mortality is ſwallowed up of life*, when thoſe imperfections and ſpots that attend our natural ſtate, ſhall be quite removed and done away. So long as our ſouls actuate their impure bodies, ſins and infirmities will cleave to the beſt: an abſolute innocence

and

and perfect *holineſs* is reſerved for that ſtate, *where all things are become new.* But yet ſo far as the frailty of our nature, and the imperfection of our preſent ſtate will ſuffer, we ought ſincerely to ſtudy to *walk* (as it is ſaid of *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*) *in all the Commandments of God blameleſs*; the general courſe and tenour of our lives ſhould correſpond and keep a conformity with the divine precepts, which, as I ſhall juſt now ſhew, are *the rule of holineſs.*

Almighty God, who well conſiders the nature of man, does not eſteem men to be either vicious or holy, from the performance of ſome particular acts: *There is not a juſt man who liveth and ſinneth not.* It is the peculiar *motto* of our Lord Chriſt, That *he did no ſin, neither was there guile found in his mouth.* But the imperfect obedience of good men, who in the general courſe of their life ſincerely ſtudy an univerſal conformity and reſpect to the divine Laws, is eſteemed by him *who judgeth righteouſly* to be ſufficient in order to our acceptance with him, upon the account of the merits and perfect obedience of our bleſſed Saviour. The wiſe God, who conſiders the frailties and imperfections that attend our preſent

preſent ſtate, expects not more from us than we are able to perform. He is not ſo rigorous a Lord to require *Brick where there is no Straw*: the terms of the Goſpel are accommodated to our capacities, and onely require a *holineſs* which is poſſible for the Creature to attain; at leaſt it exacts and expects no more, but that we endeavour ſincerely and unfeignedly to obey all thoſe precepts he has enjoyned; that we habituate our ſelves to perform good actions; that the general propenſion and inclination of our wills and appetites be towards the doing of what is impoſed upon us, and abſtaining from all kinde of evil.

By what hath been ſaid, it may appear, that *holineſs* conſiſts not in Speculation, but in Practice: 'Tis not the knowledge of duty, but the actual performance of it that intitles men to be holy; and that too, not ſuperficially, or in a good mode, and rarely performed; but ſincerely, and throughout the whole courſe of our lives. For men to know their duty and not perform it, is to inhance their own miſery, and to ſecure to themſelves double ſtripes: and to perform ſome good actions, and abſtain from the groſſer pollutions of the world, and yet to be vicious in the general

neral courſe of their lives, this is ſuch a holineſs that will never profit any man. The *rule of holineſs*, to which we muſt heartily ſtudy an actual conformity, does not diſpenſe, no not with the commiſſion of the leaſt ſin, nor omiſſion of the ſmalleſt duty.

But becauſe general deſcriptions of things are frequently overlooked, I ſhall not think it unneceſſary to deſcend to a more particular ſurvey, and conſider *Holineſs* in its ſeveral branches, as they are plainly deſcribed by the Chriſtian rule of Holineſs.

CHAP. II.

Of the Rule of Holineſs.

Although the whole *Canon* of Scripture is uſeful to inſtruct us in our duty; yet becauſe many things, if not approved, yet diſpenſed with under the old diſpenſation, are now quite antiquated and abrogate, I ſhall therefore at preſent confine my diſcourſe to the Goſpel-Oeconomy, and by the *rule* diſcover wherein the Nature of true *Holineſs*, and undefiled Religion before God conſiſts.

I am a little confident, it will not be expected I ſhould prove that the New Teſtament is of Divine Authority, and conſequently an infallible *rule* to direct us in the way of *holineſs:* the numerous late Diſcourſes, which have excellently well performed this task, againſt the prodigiouſly prophane Atheiſts this impure age hath to its laſting reproach hatched, makes me without the leaſt fear of cenſure ſuperſede this undertaking.

I ſhall take it then for granted, (it being acknowledged by all rational men) that the Goſpel is the great and certain Standard whereby we may truely judge of any man's *holineſs*; and never doubt to conclude, that he who in the general courſe and tenour of his life walks contrary to the *Rule*, can lay no claim, plead no intereſt to the title of *holineſs*; this being no other thing (as I have already ſhewed) but a combination of thoſe vertues the Goſpel-precepts enjoyn.

Now the precepts of Chriſtianity which point us our duty, may, for brevity, be reduced to theſe three general Heads. For *firſt*, they are either ſuch as enjoyn Piety towards God. *Secondly*, or ſuch that require the good government of our ſelves. Or *thirdly*, thoſe that preſcribe our

our carriage and behaviour towards others. Of theſe I ſhall take a brief ſurvey; and as I go along, excite men to the practice of every particular duty, by rational motives and inducements; and withal diſcover the perfection and compleatneſs of the Chriſtian *Rule*, above all the Inſtitutions that ever were or can be deviſed.

Firſt, amongſt thoſe Laws of Chriſtianity which enjoyn Piety towards God, we finde Love to him ſtanding in the front, and claiming the precedency. This is (as our bleſſed Saviour informs us) *the firſt and great Commandment*, it being indeed the ſource and original of all acts of obedience.

To excite our *Love*, let us but preſent to our view his infinite and tranſcendent perfections, the undeſerved favours he every minute beſtows upon us, the innumerable dangers and accidents we are daily preſerved from: Arguments forcible enough to draw Love from the moſt rocky and obdurate heart. 'Tis indeed an amazing thing, to ſee thoſe into whom he has breathed the Breath of Life, on whom he has rained ſo many floods of favours, to remain notwithſtanding as frozen, as ground which the Sun-rays never

ver touch. 'Tis an odd and ſtrange operation, that ſtreams of Love onely meet with contempt and diſdain.

Sure I am, there is a concurrence of all ſorts of motives and arguments to engage us to love God; and thoſe indeed ſo charming and endearing, that it is ſtrange any body ſhould fail in it. Methinks the work it ſelf is ſo ſweet and delectable, ſo raviſhing and lovely, that men need not be courted to it by perſwaſion. O what a great deal of ſatisfaction, of ineffable delight, does the devout ſoul finde in thoſe actings of love towards God! And if the Voluptuous and Senſualiſt would but abandon thoſe ſinful delights he now findes ſo charming and bewitching, and betake himſelf to the practice of holineſs: If he would change the object of his love, and place it where it ought to be; I doubt not but he ſhould quickly perceive there is more pleaſure, more contentment and ſatisfaction in the love of God, than in the enjoyment of all carnal pleaſures.

That man that ſhall make a juſt eſtimate of things, ſhall be eaſily convinced there is nothing worthy of love in compariſon of God. Alas! the pleaſures of this world are but ſhadows and fancies,

cies, which will ſoon diſappear! Its beauty and ſplendour is but gilded and deluſory: and is it reaſonable, nay, is it not extream madneſs to place the ſtrength of our affections on ſuch uncertain and quickly-removed vanities?

The uſual arguments of love amongſt men, are Relation, Intereſt, or the Beauty and Excellency of the Object. Now all theſe lay much ſtronger obligations upon us to love God. For Relation, is he not our Lord and Maker, who gave us life and being, who as a tender Father kindely compaſſionates our condition, and in our low eſtate has carefully minded us, when our other Relations have accounted us aliens and ſtrangers? This the Royal Pſalmiſt experimented; and I make no queſtion but many good men have been, and are living inſtances of this truth.

And indeed, that man that conſults his own intereſt, cannot but be ſtrongly excited to love that God who is the beſt benefactor, and equally willing and able to beſtow favours upon him. It is an argument of a very baſe and mean ſpirit, to deſpiſe our benefactors: but thus have we requited God, who daily loadeth us with mercies, and reneweth his bleſſings

every

every morning: we have, God knows, moſt inſolently carried our ſelves, even then, when he has been diſplaying a banner of love over us.

As for Beauty and Excellency, what in the world can compete with him, *who is glorious in holineſs*, and *whoſe Name is excellent in all the earth?* How quickly are all created beauties winked into darkneſs? At the beſt they are but ſtreams derived from this glorious being; and is it not hugely reaſonable, that he who is the original of theſe, ſhould be the chief object of our love, and make us with the Pſalmiſt ſay, *Whom have I in the heaven but thee; and there is none upon the earth I deſire beſides thee?*

I know there is no man would take it well, nay who would not be highly incenſed, and think himſelf much wronged, to have his Love called in queſtion; but God knows how little reaſon the far greater part of Mankinde have to pretend love, who ſtand not to break his Laws, to caſt behinde them, and lightly eſteem his precepts, the obedience of which is made the beſt and ſureſt character of Love.

Would God it were as eaſie to perſwade as it is to propoſe our duty. But how hard

hard is it to convince men of the folly, the extream and ſtrange madneſs, of being *lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God?* But the truth is, there is ſuch a mire and puddle of pollution in our hearts, that it quite choaks and extinguiſheth all ſparks of Love, makes us violate the principles of humanity, and become more ungueate than the beaſts who have no underſtanding.

But if this Divine flame be kindled in our Hearts, if it be ſincere and ſuperlative as it ought to be, it will eaſily employ all the faculties of our ſoul in his ſervice; it will engage, and enable us too, to perform the ſeveral Duties of Piety the Laws of Chriſtianity enjoyn; which becauſe they are ſome of the particular branches of *Holineſs*, I ſhall briefly mention, with their encouragements; and for method and order reduce to four Heads. *Firſt*, it will inſtruct and enable us to truſt and depend upon God. *Secondly*, to ſubmit and obey his Will. *Thirdly*, to honour and reverence his great and ſacred Name. And *Laſtly*, to worſhip and adore him according to the method he hath himſelf preſcribed.

I begin with the firſt, namely, That Love where it is ſincere, is a noble and gene-

rous paſſion, apt to excite and enable us to depend on God. This is, I confeſs, a duty very uſeful, and never out of ſeaſon: the Pſalmiſt wiſely adviſeth us, *to truſt in him at all times*, when we are in the midſt of all trouble, as well as when our condition is ſerene, and wholly exempt from outward fears. When the divine Providence hath placed us in the moſt diſmal circumſtances, even in this ſad and comfortleſs ſtate, our fears ought to give place to faith; we would do well to repoſe a ſpecial confidence in him, who is hereby become engaged to ſecure and defend us. This method the excellent Pſalmiſt obſerved, and reſolved conſtantly to heed in times of imminent danger: *What time I am afraid I will truſt in thee*, Pſal. 56. 3. and we finde that faithful men in former times took this courſe alſo: *We know not what to do, onely our eyes are to thee*, 2 Chron. 20. 12.

In this lapſed ſtate we lie open to a multitude of accidents; every place is attended with dangers; our enemies are as ſubtile and cunning, as they are ſtrong and numerous. The Prince of the power of the Air has his wit always upon the rack, in inventing ſtratagems and devices to undo us; and his Emiſſaries ſlip no opportunity

tunity of our ruine: and is there a safer course than to *trust in Jehovah, who is everlasting strength?* who is indeed, as the Psalmist says, *a present help in time of need.* Sure I am, it is mans greatest interest to flee to the divine Providence, which is the best guard against all dangers; for we need not doubt to conclude with the Apostle, *If God be with us, who can be against us?*

'Tis also the Law of Heaven, that in times of want we confide in God, 1 *Peter* 5. 7. *Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you.* I confess, we must not expect to be fed miraculously, to have the *Ravens* to bring bread and flesh to us morning and evening, or that the meal in our Barrel should increase and never waste, but be multiplied as the Loaves and Fish were by our Saviour: We must not foolishly dream that Manna shall fall about our Tents, when we may use the lawful means; this sure were rather a tempting of, than trusting in God. But yet, after we have experimented all lawful means and probable ways, and finde it utterly impossible for us to help our selves; then may we safely repose our confidence upon him, who *feeds the young ravens when they cry unto him.* *Therefore*

(ſays our Lord) *I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you ſhall eat, or what you ſhall drink; neither for your body, what ye ſhall put on: Is not the life more than meat? and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?* &c. *Matth.* 6. 25, 26. 'Tis rejected and condemned as a Pagan and Heathniſh ſin, to be querulous and ſollicitous of *what we ſhall eat, or what we ſhall drink, or wherewithal we ſhall be clothed: for after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek*, v. 31, 32.

I confeſs, as I cannot ſufficiently enough pity the madneſs of ſome men, who will truſt God with their Souls, but not with their ſecular Concerns; ſo could I never yet project what may be the reaſon why better men than the former are ſo apt to diſtruſt God in times of danger and want. I wiſh ſuch men would conſider how ſhrewd a preſumption this is of Atheiſm, at leaſt of eſtabliſhing the Epicurean notion of a Deity who is quite unconcerned about inferiour beings, and ſequeſtrated from the care of ſublunary affairs. For if we did indeed think that he takes notice

tice of us, we could not but confidently rely upon his care.

Secondly, we are by the perfect rule of Piety and Holineſs inſtructed to ſubmit to the divine Will, and comply with the Goſpel-precepts, which concerning all things are right. Perhaps the lot infinite Wiſdom has carved out to us, is no ways reliſhing to fleſh and blood. Whilſt others are walking amongſt roſes, enjoy all ſecular advantages, and are placed in the ſunſhine of proſperity; may be we are forced *to hang our harps upon the willows*, and ſpend our few days in ſorrow and grief. However, let us, not even under theſe ſad circumſtances, *charge God fooliſhly*, or be impatient under the ſeverity of his correction; for this is no argument of the hatred of a Father. Let us rather in this caſe view the unſpeakable reward, and the divine promiſes, which are ſufficient arguments to revive our fainting and moſt languiſhing hopes, and able to form our ſouls to true patience.

Philoſophers, if ever they attained to a perfection in any vertue, it was in their patience under the inſtability of worldly things; and yet their grounds and motives to patience were ſandy and ineffectual, and no ways comparable to the arguments

and inducements laid down in the ſcheme of Chriſtian Religion. *Epicurus* his calling to minde his former pleaſures, was but a weak plea to form him to patience under the tormenting pains of the Gout. And the *Stoicks* notion that ſufferings were no real evils, was *really* a fancy eaſily conquered by the extremity of pain.

And as we are thus obliged to ſubmit to the ſevereſt diſpenſation of Providence, ſo we ought to comply with the divine will exhibited in his Precepts. *Obedience* is undoubtedly the beſt evidence of Love; *for hereby is our love manifeſted, that we do his will:* and indeed the divine injunctions are all ſo natural, ſo equitable and juſt, that we can alleadge no impoſſibility in performing them. *His Commands*, as the Apoſtle informs us, *are not grievous*, 1 Joh. 4. 3. they require not things incommodious and burthenſome, as the moſt of other Religions do.

The third duty we are inſtructed in, is to reverence and honour his ſacred Name, to have apprehenſions and affections ſuitable to his glorious perfections. When we ſeriouſly reflect on the purity of his nature, and the infinity of his cognizance; our eſteem and veneration of him ſhould be truely elevated, and raiſed as high as poſſible,

possible, and make us with *Moses* (in a holy rapture) say, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods! who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?* Exod. 15. 11.

How impious then and unlawful is it, to prophane and violate the sacred Name of that God we should adore, by a multitude of rash and customary oaths! Sure those who own any relation to that God who is so dishonoured, will be so generous as to express their displeasure, when in company with those who thus revile him. But if God be so friendless as to have none to appear thus for him, yet such prophane wretches may know, that God himself will resent those injuries and affronts put upon him; he will vindicate his own glory of which he is so jealous, and surely *will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain.*

Of all sins, this of Swearing is the most unreasonable, and cannot pretend the ordinary incentives of Pleasure or Profit, that most of vices lay some claim to. How desperate a phrensie then is it, for men without any probability of allurements, to draw down upon themselves the vengeance of an incensed God? 'Tis sure but a mean apology, to alleadge an

habit and cuſtome, while this is the very thing that enhances their guilt: neither will it, I think, a whit leſſen the crime, that Great perſons have given it ſuch a vogue in the world.

The Name of God is a ſacred thing, which muſt not be appealed to, but in the moſt weighty and ſerious caſes: *Thou ſhalt ſwear* (ſays the Prophet) *that the Lord liveth, in truth, juſtice, and judgement.* If we either affirm or promiſe any thing by oath, it muſt be after mature deliberation, after we have aſcertained our ſelves of the truth and lawfulneſs of it: this the very Poet could dictate,

Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit----

It were to be wiſhed, that the Hectors of this age would learn of the very Heathens more reverence; and that thoſe men that pretend to good breeding, would be ſo civil, even ſometimes for the companies ſake, as to forbear thoſe Oaths that tender ears cannot hear without offence.

In the laſt place, the divine Love, if ſcattered in our Hearts, will excite us to worſhip God after the method himſelf hath preſcribed: It will direct us to the

rule

rule of Piety, where we ſhall finde every thing that relates to our immediate intercourſe with God in divine Ordinances and Worſhip exactly ordered. I confeſs, the Heathen-world, as they were confuſed in their notions of a Deity, and almoſt quite ignorant of the eternal reward; ſo were they ſuperſtitious in their Worſhip, and ſometimes ignorantly erected Altars to *an unknown God.* Their Worſhip was attended with a great deal of external pomp, was very grateful to their external ſenſes; but it reached not the Heart. But the Chriſtian rule inſtructs us to worſhip God in Spirit, and preſcribes the beſt method of devotion: It requires that *We worſhip and bow before the Lord our maker*, with all poſſible humility and reverence; that we poſſeſs our Hearts with the greatneſs and glory of that Majeſty we adore; that we be intent in our devotion, and not ſuffer ſecular concerns to intrude and interrupt us; that we act faith upon him, and believe that he *is a rewarder of thoſe that diligently ſeek him*; and that we approach the throne of grace *in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

If Devotion were not a duty, yet methinks the advantages thereof ſhould invite

vite us to the performance: But ſince God has coupled our duty and intereſt together, how amazing is it to think we ſhould ſo neglect it? How many attractives are there to approach his preſence, *who dwells in light unacceſſible?* Have we not a multitude of ſins to confeſs? many wants we would fain have ſuppli'd? How many temptations does every place preſent? How numerous are the dangers and accidents to which we lie open? and ſhould not all theſe excite us to render homage to that omnipotent power, which alone can guard us from inconveniencies? But beſides our dangers we are freed from, the mercies and favours he daily confers upon us, the freſh communications of his bounty every morning, nay minute, require at leaſt a return of praiſe, and a grateful acknowledgment. But yet alas! in ſpight of all theſe inducements, how is Devotion contemned by ſome, and neglected by moſt?

But I dare not enlarge now on the particular Branches of *Holineſs*, nor inſiſt in the recommendation of every particular duty, leſt I ſeem to digreſs from my proper ſubject. I ſhall therefore proceed to the other two Branches of Holineſs, namely, thoſe duties that reſpect our ſelves and others.

As

As to the firſt, we are by the perfect *rule of Holineſs* inſtructed to live ſoberly, to be moderate in all things, and to ſhun every kinde of exceſs, as equally hurtful to Soul and Body: It forbids complacency in thoſe luſts that war againſt both; reſtrains all irregular and impetuous inclinations; retrenches all inordinate deſires, the firſt motions to forbidden objects, and, in a word, enjoyns all thoſe vertues which reſpect either our *Bodies* or *Souls.*

For thoſe that reſpect our *Bodies*, how ſtraitly is chaſtity commanded? *For this is the will of God, even your ſanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from fornication*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 3. We are urged with the moſt affectionate earneſtneſs, to abſtain from the very firſt motions to forbidden objects, from the polluted glances and wanton laſcivious ſpeeches that are windows at which uncleanneſs enters; and that by ſuch invincible and cogent arguments, as might prove effectual with men who but conſider what they do; Luſt being a vice miſchievous to the body, *Prov.* 7. 26. hurtful to the Soul, *Prov.* 6. 32. caſting an everlaſting ſtain upon a mans good Name, *Prov.* 6. 33. undoing his Subſtance, *Prov.* 6. 26. *Job* 31. 12. and

and that which finally excludes from the Kingdom of Heaven, where nothing that pollutes can enter, 2 *Cor.* 6. 9. *Rev.* 21. 27.

'*Tis* indeed no wonder though the Religion of the Gentiles, which contained a prodigious mixture of vanity and impiety, gratified the inclinations of uncleanneſs: for if we conſult their writings, we ſhall obſerve, that the moſt abominable vice wanted not a Deity to patronize it amongſt them; which upon the matter was *an eſtabliſhing iniquity by Law*, and an argument more ſufficient to encourage than to correct vice: And although the Writings of ſome Philoſophers have been more refined, yet the Lives even of ſuch were full of the foulеſt actions. Nay, the rules which the beſt Maſters of Morality amongſt them preſcribed, never reached to the purifying of the Heart.

I confeſs, that man that ſhall take notice (and who, having eyes in his head, can evite this, when men proclaim their ſin like *Sodom*?) of the prodigious uncleanneſs this prophane age has arrived at, ſhall be ſtrongly tempted to ſuſpect the purity of the Chriſtian Rule, if he make no farther enquiry than to the practices of moſt that are called Chriſtians. We may indeed

indeed very aptly write to the profeſſors of this age, as the great Apoſtle did to the Church of *Corinth* : *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and ſuch fornication as is not ſo much as named amongſt the Gentiles*, 1 Cor. 5. 1. And I am a little afraid, if the Church ſhould ſtrictly obſerve that charge that the Apoſtle gives there, and excommunicate all ſuch wicked perſons, that our Church ſhould not need to brag much of the number of Chriſtians.

'Tis indeed matter of great ſadneſs, to conſider how much the Chriſtian Religion has ſuffered, upon the account of the ſcandalous practices of Titular Chriſtians; and I make no doubt but this age has been at more pains than any that precedes it, to increaſe the ſcandal : but ſure 'tis but a ſilly artifice to challenge the exactneſs of the *Rule*, and with *Celſus* impudently alleage that the Chriſtian Religion encourageth men to the practice of immorality and vice, ſince of all Religions, the Chriſtian onely can produce the ſtricteſt Laws againſt *all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*. 'Tis *a Doctrine*, as the bleſſed Apoſtle tells us, *according to godlineſs*, and lays undiſpenſible obligations upon its followers, both to think upon, and to do,

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whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are of good report, and ſuchlike things, which being general, include all particulars; and yet it doth not onely preſcribe general rules, but deſcendeth to the commanding of all particular vertues, and the equal prohibition of particular vices.

Next to *Chaſtity*, we might diſcourſe largely of the commendation of *Moderation* in eating and drinking, and ſhew that the exceſs of both is condemned, as being mean and ignoble; that it is the true cauſe of many loathſome diſeaſes, is attended with a prodigious multitude of temporal evils, *Prov.* 23. 22. and threatned with laſting and eternal torments hereafter. Hence our Royal Maſter fails not to exhort his Diſciples, to *Take heed to themſelves, leſt at any time they be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs*, Luke 21.34. And one of his bleſſed Apoſtles tells us, that *Drunkards ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 6. 10. And indeed daily experience puts it beyond all doubt, that thoſe ignoble ſins naturally tend to impoveriſh men, and fully verifie the Wiſe mans prediction, *That the drunkard and the glutton ſhall come to poverty*, Prov. 23. 21.

But

But paſſing thoſe vertues that concern our *Bodies*, I come now to conſider thoſe that adorn our *Souls*; and I ſhall confine my diſcourſe to thoſe which are the peculiar graces of Chriſtians, and which the Chriſtian rule does more particularly recommend: Such as Humility, Meekneſs, Contentment, and Self-denial.

If we enquire narrowly into the Lives of Heathen Philoſophers, we ſhall finde their *pride* and vain-glory ſtained the beſt of their actions. *Self-denial* was a vertue never taught in their Schools; and for *Contentment*, the rules they preſcribed were but ineffectual to recommend it.

But the Goſpel couples our Duty and Intereſt together; it commands *Humility*, and recommends its advantages and alluring attractives. It diſcovers the dangers that attend *Pride*; and the great folly of being vain of Beauty, Strength, Wit, Riches, Honours, or Preferments: Of all theſe I may uſe the Apoſtle's phraſe, *'Tis not expedient doubtleſs for men to glory*, 2 Cor. 12. 7. Are not theſe the free gifts of Divine goodneſs? and what can be more unreaſonable than for dependent creatures to be proud?

Humility is indeed ſo amiable, ſo endearing

dearing a quality, and ſo noble an embeliſhment of our nature, that where this is wanting, all other advantages are little regarded; and not onely men, but the great God alſo *reſiſts the proud*, it being a vice which, beſides Chriſtianity, Morality alſo condemns, as univerſally unbecoming to Humane nature; and that which not onely diſturbs ones ſelf, but alſo diſquiets whole ſocieties: But *God gives grace to the humble*; he takes ſuch perſons into favour, as being more pliable to receive the impreſs of his love.

And as a humble, ſo alſo a *meek* and quiet ſpirit *is in the ſight of God of great price.* And can there be a more convincing motive than this, to recommend meekneſs to Chriſtians? And indeed we cannot pretend to be the Diſciples of holy Jeſus, if we refuſe to learn that leſſon he hath copied out to us, *Matth.* 11. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*

Although a calm and quiet ſpirit is a reward to it ſelf, as every vertue is; yet it wants not a claim to a temporal felicity alſo, *Matth.* 5. 5. *Bleſſed are the meek; for they ſhall inherit the earth.* Theſe be the perſons to whom by right of promiſe this ſtately Fabrick of earth belongs.

And

And if we now view that unpleaſant vice of *Anger* oppoſite to it, this will yet adde more to its luſtre, and help to recommend it the more effectually. *Anger* being ſuch an unpleaſant humour, that it makes thoſe men it poſſeſſes unfit for humane ſociety, it being not unfitly defined by the Poet to be *a ſhort madneſs*; which indeed agrees very well with the Wiſe mans verdict of it, *Eccl. Anger reſts in the boſom of fools.* If then men would but compare the calm and happy ſerenity of Meekneſs, with that inward and outward trouble and diſquietment that is the effect of Anger, they could not but eſteem the one, and declaim againſt the other.

In the next place, our *Chriſtian rule* recommends *contentment* as the moſt precious Jewel in the Saints Diadem; 'tis that noble ingredient that makes the moſt bitter cup ſweet and pleaſant: it renders things, otherwiſe unſavory and burthenſome, to be indeed reliſhing and eaſie. This is it that ſeaſons the meaneſt meal; makes a diſh of herbs a feaſt, and a cup of cold Water pleaſe the palate: This is that vertue which makes men in the midſt of ſtorms repreſent a calm, and in the ſaddeſt circumſtances to ſing ſweetly. He

who has learned St. *Paul's* leſſon *how to want, and how to abound*, is not diſcompoſed either by Proſperity or Adverſity; but in both caſes can behave himſelf like a man in reaſon. This is it which is inſeperably connected with Godlineſs, is the ſame thing expreſſed by different names. This is a vertue ſo lovely and deſirable, attended with ſo many advantages, that we have all imaginable encouragements to hearken to the Apoſtles advice, *Heb.* 13.5. *Be content with ſuch things as ye have*; and in the evil day to heed that advice Chriſt gives his Diſciples, to *poſſeſs our ſouls with patience.*

But how diſquieting and tormenting are its contraries? *Ambition* makes men reſtleſs in raiſing their own value and eſteem above others; it prompts them to be always in diſlike with their own preſent condition; the leaſt advancement of others above them, gnaws and torments their ſpirits, and oftentimes hurries them headlong to the greateſt dangers. *Murmuring* is a moſt fretting evil, a moſt painful diſtemper, a ſin attended with the moſt dangerous conſequents, and which imbittereth the happieſt ſtate of life here. *Envy* is a vice nothing leſs criminal, attended with as diſmal effects as any, as the Apoſtle

Apoſtle St. *James* tells, *Jam.* 3. 16. *Where envying and ſtrife is, there is confuſion and every evil work.* And laſtly, *Covetouſneſs* is ſo mean and ignoble a vice, that I think although it were not (as the Apoſtle deſcribes it) *the root of all evil*; yet gallant ſpirits ſhould diſlike it, as being baſe and contemptible.

In the laſt place, the Goſpel recommends *Self-denial* as the Chriſtians peculiar Character: *If any man* (ſays our Maſter Chriſt) *will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me:* And this precept he backs with the moſt powerful incitement; *For whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it, and whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, ſhall finde it*, Mat. 16. 24, 25. I doubt not but fleſh and bloud will cry out, as once Chriſt's own Diſciples did in another caſe, *This is a hard ſaying, who can bear it?* 'Tis indeed no ſmall matter to bring down the carnal part of man to ſubmit to the loſs of Relations, Intereſt, and Life: But ſince the advantage and danger of both caſes is ſo clearly revealed, what fools will men prove, if to gain this life, they loſe the recompence of a better reward?

As the *rule of Holineſs* does thus in-

ſtruct us in thoſe duties that concern our *ſelves*; ſo it alſo teacheth us how to carry towards others. And in the firſt place, it recommends the *Royal Law of love*, as the ſpring and ſource of all other duties, *Rom.* 13. 9. *If there be any other commandment, 'tis briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf.* This, for its excellency and comprehenſiveneſs, is ſaid to be *the fulfilling of the Law*, as thoſe who neglect it are ſaid *to ſin againſt the Law.*

Now if this rule of Charity were well obſerved, it would help to correct, firſt, all undue Thoughts and Wiſhes. Secondly, all injurious Words and Speeches. And thirdly, all unjuſt Actions and Dealings towards our Neighbours.

Firſt, it would very much conduce to the regulating of our *wiſhes*, and to the keeping of our mindes in a meek and peaceable temper towards others. Charity, if ſincere, is a noble and generous vertue, which believeth and hopeth the beſt of all men: *It thinketh no evil*, as the Apoſtle amongſt many of its other good properties obſerveth, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. It eradicates and ſupplants all cenſorious thoughts, and is incompatible with thoſe tormen-

tormenting paſſions of Malice and Revenge, which, as the Wiſe man deſcribes, *ſuffer not men to ſleep except they have done miſchief*, Prov. 4. 16.

And indeed this is but the leaſt part of a Chriſtians duty, 'tis but an evidence of the loweſt degree of Charity, to retrench thoſe irregular and undue wiſhes, which oftentimes do more prejudice to our ſelves than others: If it be ſincere, it will have a further and more important influence; it will help us to govern our tongues alſo, that we may, as the great Apoſtle adviſeth us, *ſpeak evil of no man*, Tit. 3. 2. to *lay aſide all malice, and all guile and hypocriſie, and evil ſpeaking*, 1 Pet. 2. 1. and according to this precept did primitive Chriſtians walk.

But alas! we have degenerated in nothing more conſpicuouſly from their practiſe than in this: In place of their love, we have ſubſtituted an induſtrious ſearch into the iniquities of others, *Pſal.* 64. 4. and have fully verified the Apoſtles deſcription of the tongue, *Jam.* 3. 8. that it is *an unruly evil which no man can tame, a world of iniquity that ſets the whole creation on fire.*

Neither Majeſty nor innocency can now guard againſt its darts; its malignity

reacheth through all the earth; nay indeed it were good if it were bounded by this. May not the Majeſty of Heaven reſume that ſame complaint he expreſſeth, *Mal.* 3. 14. *Your words have been ſtout againſt me*; and charge the prophane Atheiſts of this age, *for opening their mouths againſt the Heavens?*

As for *Innocency*, although it is truely in it ſelf a ſtrong fence, yet it cannot eſcape the aſſaults of a licentious tongue: but with the Pſalmiſt may complain; *Behold, they belch out with their mouths, ſwords are in their lips*, Pſal. 56. 7. and I think there are few men ſo happy who cannot with the ſame holy man regret, *They lay to my charge things I know not*: but how much this violates all the obligations of Charity, and Juſtice alſo, every mans reaſon will eaſily inſtruct him.

To ſecure men from being culpable in this, it were enough onely to repreſent the meanneſs of it: but as a more noble enforcement, the Goſpel preſcribes the ſtricteſt rules againſt it, *Matth.* 7. 1, 2. *Judge not, that ye be not juged; for with what judgement ye judge, ye ſhall be judged.* A ſentence which methinks ſhould even ſtrike terrour in the conſciences of the guilty; and ſure if men would but

minde

nitde their own concern and intereſt, they ſhould more attentively hearken to the counſel of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 31,32. *Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, und clamour, and evil ſpeaking, be put way from you, with all malice. And be ye kinde one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſts ſake hath forgiven you.*

But our love muſt not conſiſt in word onely, but *in deed and in truth*, as the bleſſed Apoſtle exhorts the primitive Chriſtians, 1 *Joh.* 3. 18. It is a vain thing to pretend love, when we refuſe to evidence it by our deeds: *If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food, and one of you ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed, and filled, notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?* Jam. 2. 15, 16. We muſt make our actions and dealings the teſt whereby we may evidence our love, otherwiſe the ſincerity of it may be juſtly ſuſpected; and therefore in the firſt place we muſt actually endeavour to ſupply the wants of our indigent Brethren: This is above all things recommended to Chriſtians, 1 *Pet.* 4. 8. eſpecially to thoſe who have received a large allowance of out-

ward bleſſings, *v.* 10. and it is noted as an evidence that *the love of God dwelleth not in thoſe perſons*, who *having this worlds goods, ſhut up their bowels of compaſſion from thoſe that have need*, 1 Joh. 3. 17. Alas! little do men know how quickly the balance may change; how ſoon the richeſt may be in poverty, and ſtand in need of that ſupply that they now in the days of their plenty deny others: the inſtances to prove this, are more numerous than that they can be doubted or need to be related.

Indeed the performance of this duty paſſeth not without a temporal reward; God, who accounts it a lending to himſelf, hath promiſed to repay it; and ſure there cannot be better ſecurity than his promiſe. And I queſtion not but all ages can atteſt the truth of what the Wiſe man obſerveth, *Prov.* 11. 24. *There is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth; and there is that witholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.*

I confeſs, I know no vertue more becoming a Chriſtian than Charity, and ſcarce any more ſcandalouſly neglected; and I am ſorry to think that thoſe good men who compaſſionate the wants of the indigent, ſhould be ſo unworthily ſcandalized

dalized, as if they were but lukewarm Proteſtants, and eſtabliſhed the Popiſh Merit: but this is a piece of madneſs I ſhall rather pity than inveigh againſt; and although I be no friend to merit, yet I cannot but ſpeak honourably of thoſe whoſe charity and good works make them lovely in the ſight of God, who has accounted it *pure religion and undefiled, to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction*, Jam. 1.27.

In the next place, the *Chriſtian rule* requires *Juſtice* in our intercourſe and commerce, and that in our dealings we be exactly conſcientious, according to that great rule of equity, *Matth.* 7. 12. *All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them; for this is the law and the prophets.* Injuſtice is a vice ſo mean and ignoble, th t I cannot but admire how great men ſhould court it: and if men would but actuate their Reaſons, I am ſure they ſhould never become guilty of that which, if charged with, they cannot patiently endure, nor be reconciled with the perſons which freely reprove them. There is no man, I think, that would be ſatisfied to be called a Cheat; and is it not unreaſonable to think they ſhall evite this character who practiſe injuſtice? *The*

The great bait and and allurement to Injuſtice, is gain and advantage; but how viſibly hath Almighty God by a wiſe providence defeated mens deſignes in this! *There is* (as *Eliphaz* obſerved) *a fire that conſumeth the tabernacles of bribery*, Job 15.34. and as the Wiſe man tells us, *An inheritance may be gotten haſtily at the beginning, but the end thereof ſhall not be bleſſed*, Prov. 20.21.

Thirdly, The Chriſtian rule is a moſt compendious and compleat directory to men in every ſtation and place: Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, Husband and Wife may from hence learn their duty. As it gives no encouragement to Tyrants, ſo neither does it allow Rebellion in Subjects; but condemns it as a ſin heinous and unnatural. But I cannot ſtand to enlarge upon every particular duty; onely I ſhall infer, that from the accompliſhment of thoſe duties enjoyned by the *Chriſtian rule*, is formed that *Holineſs* I would fain perſwade men to follow.

To put a cloſe to this Chapter, it will not, I think, be amiſs to ſhew, that the Chriſtian rule of Holineſs is the moſt noble and moſt excellent that was ever extant; that it far excels the Schemes of Mor-

Morality drawn by the beſt and moſt celebrated Maſters of Pagan Philoſophy, and is more comprehenſive and effectual to form men to true Holineſs than the Moſaical Law.

I confeſs, the Heathen Religion does not in the leaſt deſerve to be compared with the Chriſtian, no more (I may, ſay much leſs) than the light of the dimmeſt Candle ſhould be compared with the Sun in its brightneſs, when all miſts and clouds are diſpelled. It were indeed too great an honour to name the *Alcoran* with the *New Teſtament*; the one being corrupt and imperfect, the other pure and perfect in its tendency, deſigning to make men truely vertuous and holy.

If we view the rules which the beſt and moſt refined Moraliſts preſcribed, we ſhall finde much Braſs amongſt their Gold, many things exceedingly faulty, which, inſtead of forbidding, encouraged many foul vices. Thus concerning piety towards God, what unbecoming thoughts did they entertain of him? *They changed* (as the Apoſtle to the *Romans* obſerves) *the glory of an incorruptible God into an Image made like corruptible man*, Rom. 1. 23. and in thoſe moral duties that concerned themſelves and others, it were

were eaſie to ſhew how miſerably they failed. The famous Peripatetick pleaded for the revenging of Injuries: The divine *Plato* allowed the community of Wives: The ſtrict *Stoicks* patronized the lawfulneſs of Self-murther; and thus *profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools.*

And yet (to the ſhame of Chriſtians) how conſpicuous was the moral gallantry of the *Romans!* how famous and glorious are they eſteemed for their Juſtice and Conſtancy in friendſhip by all ſucceeding ages! their vertue did conquer reſpect and eſteem from their Enemies, and made them beloved by thoſe who fear'd their power. And here I cannot but take notice of St. *Auguſtin*'s commendation of the old *Romans: Becauſe God* (ſays he) *would not beſtow Heaven upon the* Romans, *they being Pagans, he beſtowed the Empire of the world upon them, becauſe they were vertuous.*

And yet the beſt rules thoſe Illuſtrious Hero's and Law-givers taught, are not comparable to the Laws of Chriſtianity, upon theſe three accounts. *Firſt*, the Pagan Law is deficient in many things, and many particular Laws mightily tend to the promoting of vice; their Law-givers being

being ignorant of the introduction of ſin, never made any precepts againſt the firſt motions to forbidden objects. *Secondly*, thoſe good Laws they taught, are more clearly revealed in the Goſpel, *Which hath brought life and immortality to light.* As the Goſpel commands onely ſuch things that are good, and forbids onely vice; ſo it more conſpicuouſly manifeſts what is good, that we may do it, and what is evil, that we may evite it. The good Laws that *Epaminondas* in *Thebes*, *Lycurgus* in *Lacedemon*, and *Ariſtides* in *Athens* taught, are in the Goſpel-Oeconomy more excellently confirmed; and we are now undoubtedly ſecured, that we do well in obſerving what is commanded, and in abſtaining from what is prohibited; which *Numa Pompilius*, *Marcus Antonius*, and all the Law-givers either of *Greece* or *Rome*, could never be fully aſcertained of. *Thirdly*, we have better encouragements and inducements to obey the Goſpel-precepts than any other Religion preſcribes. The beſt motive to vertue amongſt the Heathens was, that *vertue is a reward to it ſelf*; that it is the means to be celebrated by after-ages, and ſuch like; which were but inſignificant encouragements, if compared with the eternal and unſpeak-

unſpeakably glorious reward which Chriſtianity holds forth, and thoſe ſevere threatnings by which it ſecures its Laws; of which I ſhall ſpeak anon.

As for the *Moſaical Law*, which, next to the Chriſtian, is the moſt exact and incomparable, there are three reaſons why it is not to be compared with, it being ſo far exceeded by the Goſpel. *Firſt*, the Moſaical diſpenſation is not unfitly called by the great Apoſtle, *A law of a carnal commandment*, Heb. 7. 16. and *A Law which made nothing perfect*, v. 19. but the Goſpel, which is there called *the bringing in of a better hope*, is more ſpiritual and refined; and *Jeſus* is ſaid to be *a ſurety of a better covenant*, v. 22. So that we may argue as the Apoſtle in the 11th verſe of that cited Chapter doth: *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical Prieſthood, (for under it the people received the Law) what further need was there that another prieſt ſhould ariſe?* I confeſs, the legal Sacrifices did ſhadow forth the ſatisfaction of Chriſt; but yet I make no doubt but we may now underſtand the intent and meaning of all thoſe *Types* much better than they could. *Secondly*, the *Ceremonial Law*, as it was very burthenſome, ſo did it chiefly tend to make the obſervers

obſervers thereof externally righteous, and did not ſo ſtrongly enforce the purifying of the heart. As for the *Moral Law*, the Chriſtian rule as it does as ſtrictly enjoyn it, ſo it does much more powerfully excite men to the performance of it, promiſing not a temporal but an eternal reward. *Thirdly*, the Moſaical diſpenſation did indulge many practices which the Chriſtian rule juſtly condemns; ſuch as Polygamy and Divorce, and ſeveral marriages allowed by no other Law: and indeed the whole contexture of the Jewiſh Religion ſeems to be onely calculate as it did well correſpond with the humour and genius of that people, and could not therefore be a general Law, agreeing with, and well attemperate to the inclinations and humours of all Nations, as the Chriſtian rule is.

Any man that ſhall compare the Jewiſh Religion with the Chriſtian, ſhall be eaſily convinced that this does more effectually conduce to the *purifying of us from all filthineſs both of the fleſh and of the ſpirit* than the former; and that of all the Schemes of Religion that ever were publiſhed, none does deſerve to be paralel'd with Chriſtianity; nor can adopt to them that noble character the great Apoſtle

ſtle gives of the Goſpel, *Rom.* 1. 16. *That it is the power of God to ſalvation.*

CHAP. III.

Motives and inducements to the practice of Holineſs.

As the naked propoſal and repreſentation of an excellent and beautiful object, is motive enough to excite our love, and draw out our affections to it: ſo methinks *Holineſs*, which of all things is the moſt noble, moſt excellent, and the moſt lovely, ſhould, even abſtracted from the conſiderations of its utility and advantages, conquer our eſteem. But God knows how much our depraved natures in this lapſed eſtate ſtand in need of encouragements to excite us to our duty; and I wiſh common experience did not make it too certain, that all motives are little enough to form us to Holineſs.

In the former Chapters I have onely laid a foundation to this: for I thought it fit to tell men what I underſtand by *Holineſs*, before I ſhould excite them to it. In this dark age of the world we want not inſtances (God knows, too many) of mens too frequent miſtaking vice for vertue,

vertue; to prevent which errour, it was thought neceſſary to ſhew men their duty; and having done this, the next thing I propoſed, was to lay down ſeveral motives and inducements to engage men to the practiſe of Holineſs, founded ſolely upon this, that all thoſe endearing arguments that prevail with us to perform any duty or action relating to our ſecular concerns, do more powerfully oblige us to be holy.

This is, I confeſs, a ſubject which for its nobleneſs deſerves a better judgement, a more clear wit, and a more enlivened and quick fancy to handle it than I can pretend to: yet if I can but prevail with others to perfect what I have begun, I ſhall not think I have much miſ-employ'd my time in writing this Diſcourſe.

This Chapter is like to be ſomewhat diſproportionable to the reſt in length, it being at firſt the onely deſigned ſubject to be diſcourſed on; I ſhall therefore divide it into ſeveral Sections.

SECT. I.

The noble pattern of Holineſs.

The great inclination of Mankinde to Imitation, gave ground (I doubt not)

to that old Maxime, *Plus docent exempla quàm præcepta*; our depraved natures are very apt to contemn Precepts, and to court forbidden objects: The tye of a Commandment is become (by our increaſed guilt) too weak to binde us to our duty, and is made as light of as *Sampſon* made of thoſe ropes with which he was bound before his locks were cut. But O what a ſecret and powerful influence have Examples on the ſpirits of men! I have ſeen Servants and Children who have contemned Commands, yet ſhamed to their duty by the Example of their Maſters and Parents. The courage and valour of a Captain, proves frequently more powerful to inſpirit inferiour Souldiers, than the moſt forcible injunctions and helps to make even cowards ſtout; whileas a timorous Commander diſheartens the braveſt Souldiers, and by his flight will make them who feared no danger turn their backs.

Common experience makes it paſt doubt, that the patrociny and example of great men is enough to render any thing faſhionable. We daily have proofs of this before our eyes: nay, ſo powerful do examples ſometimes prove, that not onely the ſilly modes and geſtures of men have been

been imitated, but alſo their natural imperfections, as *Nero's* wry Neck was at *Rome.* It is the Poet's obſervation:

Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis.

Upon which account, I heartily wiſh the Nobles and Great men of this age would illuſtrate Holineſs by their examples; and I doubt not but contemned Holineſs ſhould be as faſhionable as they have now made Vice by their patrociny. In ſacred Writ we read, that when the Rulers of *Judah* and *Iſrael* were religious, and examples of Vertue, that the whole people imitated their footſteps, and worſhipped the Lord God of their Fathers: But when the Rulers became patrons of Vice, then the whole people ſacrificed in the high places, and worſhipped their Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel.*

It is indeed a caſe that well deſerves to be regretted with flouds of tears, that the footſteps of thoſe who tranſgreſs ſhould prove more efficacious and effectual, and have a greater influence on men, than the preſidents of good men: but more lamentable is it, that deſpiſed vertue lies like the contemned aſhes on the level, and has ſo few to raiſe up its eſteem by their examples.

And now, ſeeing Examples have ſo much force, methinks I hear the Captain of our ſalvation ſaying, as *Abimelek* ſaid to the men that were with him, *Judg.* 9. 48. *Make haſte, and do as I have done.* Chriſt Jeſus hath by his example taught us our duty, 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. *As he which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation; becauſe it is written, Be ye holy as I am holy.* Upon which account we are ſeriouſly exhorted in Scripture to look unto Jeſus, and to walk as he walked; and can any conſideration more abundantly ſerve to inſpirit and excite us to live holy, than this? Methinks our having ſo brave an example ſhould provoke us to follow his footſteps, *who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

There are two chief reaſons that greatly prevail with us to imitate other examples. *Firſt*, the dignity and greatneſs of the perſon. *Secondly*, Intereſt and advantage. Now both theſe motives ſhould moſt powerfully prevail with us to make Chriſt the copy of our lives: For *firſt*, if we conſider the *dignity* and worth of his perſon, is he not the Son of the living God, who in the days of his humiliation *thought it no robbery to be called equal*

equal with God? He was not a perſon of a mean and low extraction, how meanly ſoever he lived here, but one of extraordinary worth, who by partaking of humane nature elevated it to the higheſt degree of honour: He was not onely *the chiefeſt amongſt ten thouſands*, but the delight of Heaven and Earth, before whom the Princes of the Earth muſt appear, and the great men, to give him an account of their works. And as for *Intereſt*, I ſhall afterwards make it plain, that we in nothing more croſs our advantage, than in walking contrary to Chriſt.

But alas! how little are we moved by this noble preſident to minde Holineſs? how ſeldom do we expreſs in our actions the vertues of our ſpiritual King? although there is nothing more rational, more equitable and juſt, than to follow his footſteps who hath called us to his Kingdom and Glory; nothing more honourable, nor can advance our happineſs more than to be *conform to the image of Chriſt*; yet in oppoſition to the moſt endearing encouragements, we have as much ſet at nought his example, as *Herod* and his men of war did his perſon, *Luke* 23. 11. Alas! what tears are ſufficient to expreſs and ſet forth this exceeding great madneſs and inſolency?

Methinks I hear our bleſſed Prince ſpeaking thus in his own vindication: Ye unwiſe and fooliſh ſons of men, how long will ye prefer imperfect and ignoble patterns to one that is every whit perfect and compleat? In your ſecular concerns ye judge more rationally, prove a thouſand times wiſer; for who amongſt you does not make diligent enquiry for the moſt exact pattern, that ye may conform what ye deſigne according to it? but in matters of everlaſting moment, how careleſs, how negligent and fooliſh do ye prove? If I had not been held forth as the moſt deſirable copy, as a pattern moſt accommodate to your ſtate, your caſe had been more tolerable; but ſince you can pretend no rational excuſe for your rejecting of me, *Behold, ye deſpiſers, wonder and periſh.*

I confeſs, our bleſſed Prince performed many extraordinary and miraculous actions, which could have no other author but one inveſted with omnipotency; and although we cannot, are not required to ſet Chriſt as our preſident in theſe, as likewiſe in many other ſpecial actions he performed, as his faſting forty days, *&c.* yet even theſe we are called to admire; and muſt in ſo far imitate, as they were ex-

expreſſions of his great charity and kindneſs to men, and of his truſt and dependancy upon his Heavenly Father. But as for thoſe moral actions he performed, we are extreamly culpable if we do not make him our pattern, if we walk not as he walked: And it is ſure the moſt unaccountable thing that can be, to profeſs our ſelves to be his Diſciples, and to deſpiſe the leſſons he hath copied out to us.

The whole life of Chriſt being one continued lecture of Holineſs, preſents to our view a large field to diſcourſe upon: but my intended brevity will not allow me to mention all thoſe particular actions and vertues of his, which we ought to imitate. I ſhall therefore contract my diſcourſe to thoſe more remarkable inſtances wherein we ſhould induſtriouſly endeavour to imitate the holy Jeſus in his ſpirit and actions: and ſure there cannot be a more powerful motive to form us to holineſs than his moſt excellent life, which is a pattern abſolutely perfect, and deſigned as a fair copy after which we ſhould write.

In the firſt place, our bleſſed Leader (for ſo he is called, *Iſa.* 55. 4.) hath by his precept, as well as his practice, enjoyn-

ed us to learn meekneſs and humility of him, *Mat.* 11. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Throughout the whole courſe of his life he did evidence a ſpirit full of calmneſs and quietneſs. If we trace his footſteps from the Cradle to the Croſs, we ſhall not finde him either by his words or actions diſcovering the leaſt expreſſion of wrath, or revenge; but the moſt admirable diſpoſition of gentleneſs and meekneſs, even then when his inſulting Enemies endeavoured to caſt upon him the moſt ignominious affronts. We read, *Numb.* 12. 3. of *Moſes* his great meekneſs; but how was he once and again tranſported with paſſion! but never did our meek Jeſus, by the moſt inſufferable abuſes he received, ever diſcover a diſcompoſed ſpirit. *Iſa.* 53. 7. *He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his mouth.* He did indeed frequently meet with extraordinary provocations to anger; but yet how ſweet were his reproofs? when the *Samaritans* refuſed to receive him, *Luke* 9. 53. he did not treat them with contumelious ſpeeches, nor revenge himſelf upon them, although he could

could have done it with eaſe; but being deſired by his exaſperated Diſciples *to call for fire from Heaven to conſume them*, he rebuked their revengeful motion with *The Son of man is not come to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them.* It would be too prolix a buſineſs to inſtance the ſeveral examples of his Gentleneſs and Meekneſs; onely let us view the laſt ſcene of his life, where we ſhall behold lively inſtances to confirm this. When he did finde his three Diſciples, whom he had commanded to watch, ſleeping, he did not upbraid them for their negligence, but gently aſks them, *What, could not ye watch with me one hour?* and when he was treacherouſly accoaſted by his own Diſciple, who became leader to a great multitude who came out with Swords and Staves to apprehend him, with what aſtoniſhing mildneſs did he entertain this Traytor, who had the impudence to betray him with a kiſs? *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* Mat. 26.50. or, as another of the Evangeliſts expreſſeth it, *Judas, betrayeſt thou the Son of man with a kiſs?* This was all the hard language he treated him with. And after he was apprehended, with what horrid contumelies and affronts did

did his barbarous Enemies entertain him? they did ſpit in his face, and buffet him; (the higheſt affronts imaginable) they ſtripped him of his ordinary cloaths, and put upon him a fools robe and a Crown of Thorns; and being thus diſguiſed, they expoſe him to the mockery and contempt of the Spectators: Notwithſtanding of all which, he *opened not his mouth*; but with a moſt ſedate and ſerene temper he received all theſe abuſes, as the Apoſtle *Peter* expreſſeth it, 1 *Pet.* 2. 23. *When he was reviled he reviled not again, when he ſuffered he threatned not, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.*

Meekneſs, I confeſs, is ſo noble a vertue, accompanied with ſo many admirable and charming advantages, that it needs (as one would think) but few words to recommend it to men; but no argument is like to prevail more with generous mindes, then the example of ſo excellent and perfect a Pattern. Sure I am, it is the moſt unaccountable thing imaginable, for the Diſciples of ſo meek a Maſter to be of a diſpoſition and temper quite oppoſite to his.

But as his meekneſs, ſo is his *humility* alſo recommended to our imitation: As he

he was of a meek, ſo alſo of a lowly ſpirit. His firſt appearance upon earth was but mean and deſpicable; he was born (as the Scripture informs us) in a low eſtate, more fit for the meaneſt of his Diſciples, than for ſo great a Prince. He was not brought forth in ſome ſtately Palace, nor born in a Chamber curiouſly deckt, but in a vile Stable where the bruit beaſts had their reſidence. Nay, after he had diſcovered himſelf by his Illuſtrious works to be a great Prophet, the *true Meſſiah who enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world*, yet how humbly did he walk! his Companions he did chuſe were but mean Fiſhermen; his Occupation and Employment was no ways honourable; and his Revenues were but ſmall, as he himſelf did teſtifie, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air neſts; but the Son of man hath not where he may lay his head.*

Although his deſcent and extraction was incomparably great, yet he rather endeavoured to conceal than to brag of it; and ſo humble was he, that he choſe rather to attribute the praiſe of his admired works to his Father, than take the honour of them to himſelf, *Joh.* 8. 28. *I do nothing of my ſelf, but as my Father hath*

hath taught me I ſpeak theſe things.

He was not ambitious of Rule and Government, but modeſtly refuſed to be a Ruler and Judge. Nay, when the multitude thought to make him a King, he ſhunned their ſociety by an inviſible removal, it being quite contrary to his deſigne in coming into the world, (as he tells us, *Matth.* 20. 28.) *he came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter.* And to correct the inſolent pride and ambition of his followers, how did he ſtoop to waſh his Diſciples feet! a moſt admirable evidence of his lowlineſs of ſpirit.

And now ſince our great Lord and Maſter did ſo wonderfully debaſe himſelf to the form of a Servant; ſince in all his actions he did manifeſt that he was meek and lowly, how prodigiouſly incongruous is it for thoſe who profeſs themſelves to be his Diſciples to be proud and lofty?

I confeſs, Humility is a grace well becoming our ſtate as creatures; we are but dependent beings, having life and motion, and all thoſe endowments we are proud of, *from the Father of ſpirits, from whom every good gift cometh.* The freſh communications of his love we conſtantly participate of, are freely beſtowed; which he

he may therefore, when he thinks fit, with an equal freedom and eaſe remove, without being guilty of injuring us.

Humility is that peculiar grace that qualifies and fits us to receive the divine aid and aſſiſtance; as the Apoſtle St. *James* tells us, *he gives grace to the humble.* Upon which account we may with the Wiſe man well conclude: *Better is it to be of an humble ſpirit with the lowly, than to divide the ſpoil with the proud,* Prov. 16. 19.

I doubt not but every conſidering man will finde his own Reaſon ſuggeſt a ſufficient ſtore of arguments to confute the imperious aſſaults of Pride and Ambition: but methinks none can more powerfully prevail with ingenuous ſpirits, than the conſideration of Chriſt's humility: with this how effectually may he repel every temptation to pride, by ſaying, Was my Maſter lowly of ſpirit, and does it become me to be proud?

Thirdly, Chriſt is alſo ſet forth as our Pattern in his ſufferings: *If when ye do well* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *and ſuffer for it ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hitherto were ye called: for Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps,*

ſteps, &c. 1 *Pet.* 2. 20, 21, &c. *Heb.* 12. 1, 2. His patience under his ſufferings was very admirable: for although he was flouted and contemned by his unworthy creatures, was expoſed to the baſe outrages of ſcandalous ſinners, was made a ſpectacle, ſet at nought, ſpit upon, and ſmitten by unworthy worms, whom with a word he could have eaſily daſhed into nothing; in a word, though he endured all that malice could invent, ſuffered the worſt of temporal evils, and became *obedient to the curſed death of the croſs*; yet notwithſtandig, how patiently did he *endure the contradiction of ſinners?* how entirely did he ſubmit to his Fathers Will? Although he was extreamly ſenſible of the weight of his ſufferings, yet he did not in the leaſt evidence any revengeful mind in the midſt of his extream tortures but ſweetly recommended his ſoul into his Fathers hands. And now can any motive more effectually convince us to ſuffer patiently?

But God knows how much we ſet at nought this preſident: fain would we enjoy a continual proſperity, a life of eaſe, without the leaſt mixture or allay of trouble. When we meet with any thing that imbitters our condition, like the murmuring

ing *Iſraelites*, we fret and repine, and our ſpirits begin to boil with rage and diſcontent; we cannot endure to have our pleaſures impaired, but *Jonah*-like we are diſcontented, and ready to ſay, *we do well to be angry*: we aggravate the moſt minute trouble with imagined circumſtances; and are ready to ſay, *Come, behold and ſee if there be any affliction like mine.* And although we are aſſured that our repinings cannot remove or lighten our burthen, cannot give us the leaſt eaſe or relief; yet we never reſt till thoſe puddled ſtreams be ſtirred up. Our grumblings are almoſt inſeparable concomitants of our ſufferings; and if our Father ſmite us, we begin to accuſe his love and tenderneſs, notwithſtanding he hath inſtructed us that *whom he loveth he chaſteneth.*

If we meet with reproaches, our revenge is on the wing; the leaſt affront kindles this unſanctified fire: No arguments can tame our Fury; no preſident proves effectual to form our Souls to true patience. If we drink of the waters of *Marah*, we complain of their bitterneſs, and, like fooliſh Children, think we are hardly dealt with.

And although impatience enflames rather

ther than allays the diſtemper, though it augments the degrees of our trouble, and diſenables us to bear the ſtroke of Adverſity; yet we will not be perſwaded to a calm and quiet ſubmiſſion to the divine Will. Though impatience exaſperates the pain, yet we think we do well to be angry. If we meet with injuries, our appetite of revenge is ſtirred up; *fleſh* and *bloud* we ſay cannot *endure* ſuch *affronts*; we imagine it ſtains our Reputation and Honour in the world, and is degenerous and ſervile.

Thus do we ſew Fig-leaves to cover our nakedneſs; but the all-ſeeing God knows that all theſe repinings are arrows directed againſt his providence; otherwiſe we ſhould with the Royal Pſalmiſt ſay, *I will not open my mouth, for thou didſt it.* To this impregnable Fortreſs he had his recourſe, when cauſleſly curſed and reviled by *Shimei:* it was this that ſilenced old *Eli, It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good:* he durſt not quarrel at the meſſage, but quietly he ſubmits. There is a ſecret providence which doth overrule the moſt terrible accidents, and is not accountable to humane Reaſon. All thoſe calamities and ſufferings we undergo, are ordered by infinite Counſel; and in repining

pining at ſuch diſpenſations, we indirectly blame Almighty Goodneſs and Wiſdome.

Is it fit and congruous that God ſhould take meaſures from men in his Oeconomy of the World? is it reaſonable that the whole courſe of things ſhould be put out of order, to ſatisfie every private mans humor? can there be any greater madneſs, than to preſcribe rules of Government to infinite Wiſdome? Why then are we diſſatisfied with our adverſe ſtate? why do we repine and complain?

If we did indeed compare our Mercies with our Sufferings, our Receipts with our Merits, or our Condition with that of ſome others, we could not but be convinced of our folly: but we ſtill pore upon the ſore; all our thoughts are taken up and in exerciſe about our affliction: if we would deal rationally, let us view the ſufferings of our bleſſed Redeemer, and ſee if we dare make a contrary concluſion to that of the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 4. 1. *Foraſmuch then as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the fleſh*, let us *arm* our *ſelves likewiſe with the ſame minde:* He ſuffered patiently and calmly for us; and it is but reaſonable that Servants imitate their Maſter, and ſuffer the diſaſters they meet

with, with the ſame *minde* that he did; that being thus made conform to our head, we may be alſo partakers with him of his joy.

'Tis indeed an unchilde-like behaviour, to quarrel at the diſpenſations of our Heavenly Father: Alas! all we merit by our ſins, is ſtripes and chaſtiſements; and *it is of the Lords mercy that we are not conſumed*: ſure many who have offended leſs, have been juſtly ſent to *everlaſting burnings*, do now *dwell with devouring flames*; and *why ſhould a living man complain?* it were certainly more rational to be humbled for the evil that occaſioned the rod, that our preſent miſery may not be the prelude to more laſting torments. Nay, there is nothing that more offends God, that is more contrary to the pattern ſet before us, than to murmur and repine; let us therefore ſtudy to bear the reſemblance of our eldeſt Brother, that our Heavenly Father may acknowledge us for his Children.

In the next place, Chriſt's *obedience* to the Will of his Father, is ſet forth as our preſident; and can any thing more powerfully perſwade us to *obedience* than his *example?* which not onely diſcovers our duty, but alſo inſpirits and enables us to perform

perform it. If the marvelous pattern of Chriſt's entire obedience does not form our wills to do what God enjoyns, I ſcarce know any argument that will prove effectual.

And now, how ſerious was our Lord Chriſt in diſpatching that buſineſs his Father intruſted him with? *The work that his Father gave him to do he finiſhed it*, Joh. 17. 4. and he teſtifieth of himſelf, *That he did always thoſe things that pleaſed his Father*, Joh. 8.29. and that he might more emphatically expreſs this, he tells us, *Joh.* 4. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work*: and indeed, in that he ſo entirely reſigned the whole power of his Will to his Father, *Not my will, but thy will be done*, we have the moſt unqueſtionable proof of his perfect obedience. He was, as the great Apoſtle tells us, *obedient to the death of the Croſs*, ſubmitted to the moſt dreadful ſufferings, that he might inſtruct us *to keep his commandments, even as he kept his Fathers commandments*, Joh. 15. 10. and *that the ſame minde be in us that was in him.*

But God knows how little we regard either his Precepts or Examples: for although our great Maſter has made his o-

bedience our rule, yet how ready are we to deſpiſe it, if in the leaſt it croſs our humours or carnal intereſt? Alas! little do we conſider, that obedience is eſſentially neceſſary in order to our ſupream happineſs; and that torments, as ſevere and intolerable as they are laſting, are the lot of the diſobedient.

It were to be wiſhed that the rebellious poſterity of *Adam* would but ſeriouſly ponder what they will be able to ſay in the great day of Audit. Sure I am, the whole Contexture and Harmony of the divine Precepts and Doctrines are equitable and juſt, and therefore call for our hearty compliance with them. The wiſe God never iſſued out any Command which could not be obeyed; he is not like the *Ægyptian Task-maſters*, to require *Brick while there is no Straw.* Nay indeed our duty and intereſt are coupled together ſo cloſely, that if we diſobey and rebel, we may thank our ſelves for the miſery we have choſen.

And as his Obedience is ſet before us for imitation, ſo is his *Love*, *Charity*, and *Compaſſion* alſo. His whole life was ſpent in *doing good* to men: how tranſcendent is his love in pitying us in our degenerate and forlorn eſtate? when we were at

oddes

odds with Heaven, and incapable to help our ſelves, then, even then, did he commiſerate our caſe, and by his *own Blood* reconciled us to the Father. It is the greateſt demonſtration of love imaginable, for *a man to lay down his life for his friend*, Joh. 15. 13. and yet more wonderful was the love of our Redeemer in paſſing through ſo many cruel ſufferings for us, who were but Rebels and Enemies. O how ſhould the remembrance of his boundleſs compaſſions tranſport and raviſh us with love? how ſtrange is it, that the higheſt endearments of Love have not inflamed our ſpirits, and made Love mutual and reciprocal?

Love is a moſt excellent affection, of a noble original, by which we reſemble the beſt of beings; the great God being by the beloved Diſciple deſcribed to be *Love:* and indeed well does this deſcription ſute with his dealings with men. But alas! how unlike are we to God in this? there is ſcarce any duty more frequently inculcated by our Saviour than *Love*, John 15. 12. *This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you:* and yet how little efficacy has either his precept or example with us?

Bleſſed Redeemer! how unworthy do

impure Earth-worms requite thy love? thou haſt not been wanting to conquer our affections, and to inflame our frozen hearts with love to thee, and to our Neighbours alſo: Thy Life and Death comprehend the moſt endearing arguments imaginable; and yet well maiſt thou aſk us as once thou didſt *Peter, Love you me?* but God knows there are but a very few who can unfeignedly ſay as this Diſciple did, *Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* We can remember all thy ſorrows without tears, and look upon thy agonies with an unconcerned eye: We can view thee in the *Garden*, when grief and pain made thee ſweat *drops of blood*, and behold thee as thou ſtoodſt accuſed as a Malefactor before *Pilat*, as thou wert contemned, ſcourged, and derided by impure worms, and moſt ſpitefully repreſented in a fools habit: we can aſcend Mount *Calvary*, and contemplate thee as enduring the moſt ſhameful *death of the Croſs*, and hanging betwixt two Thieves, and all this time have Adamantine hearts, which receive no impreſſion. *Bleſſed Redeemer!* come, touch theſe hearts of ours, that they may be overcome with love, that our wills and affections may be perfectly moulded according to thy pleaſure.

Sure

Sure if we had any ſparks of Generoſity or common Ingenuity, we could not thus deſpiſe ſo much love: The very *Publicans* (who were reputed the worſt of men) *yet loved thoſe that loved them:* And it hath even in the moſt degenerate times been reckoned the higheſt baſeneſs to contemn Benefactors; yet more brutiſh are we become than theſe, and may very fitly be ranked in a Category inferiour to that of bruits: *For the Aſs* (as ſacred Writ tells us) *knoweth his maſters crib, and the Ox his owner*, Iſa. 1. 3. The very beaſts in their own manner expreſs a kinde of love to their Benefactors; and yet although our Redeemer hath made our peace by his bloud on the Croſs, and hath reverſed that ſentence of Damnation paſſed upon us; although he hath endured the greateſt diſhonour and pain imaginable, that we might be delivered *from the wrath to come*, yet this unparalleled kindneſs, the greateſt endearment of love, hath not had the kindly effect to quicken our dead and benummed hearts, but like a lifeleſs carkaſs we remain inſenſible without the leaſt return of love.

And indeed it can ſcarce be well expected that the example of his love to us ſhould engage us to love one another,

ſince it hath produced ſo little love in us to himſelf. But however, I need not take much pains to prove that hereby we demonſtrate our ſelves to be of all men the moſt ungrate, and juſtly liable to the ſevereſt puniſhment ever inflicted upon the greateſt criminal.

It would be too prolix to enumerate the ſeveral inſtances wherein Chriſt is ſet forth as our *Pattern:* ſure I am, he hath by his example taught us the exerciſe of all vertues; and I may ſay (as himſelf ſaid in another caſe) *If we know theſe things, happy are we if we do them.*

To ſum up this Section, it will not be amiſs to obviate an Objection, which is indeed but very trivial, although it be too commonly urged: the Objection is, *How is it poſſible for men to conform to Chriſt, and be holy as he is holy? Anſ.* I have already told, that it is not expected that we ſhould imitate our bleſſed Redeemer in all and every of thoſe actions he performed: but in all thoſe moral duties which he hath enjoyned by his righteous precepts, and encouraged us by his example to perform, theſe we muſt by no means neglect: and to manifeſt the poſſibility of doing theſe, we may ſatisfie our ſelves by viewing the pious and devout lives of primitive

primitive Chriſtians. It is a great miſtake to think we are commanded to a rigorous and ſtrict converſation which cannot be attained; the faithful in former ages have run the ſame race that is ſet before us; they have fully enough cleared the poſſibility of our duty: *Wherefore ſeeing we alſo* (as the Apoſtle argues) *are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin that doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us*, Heb. 12. 1. For ſhame, let us rather imitate the excellent holineſs of primitive Chriſtians, than the impure practices of thoſe *who are ſtrangers from the ſacred Covenant.*

O the perfect love and imitable kindeneſs of the firſt profeſſors of the Goſpel! what purity, what integrity and innocence appeared in their lives? how raviſhing and ſplendant were their vertues and graces; their Patience in ſuffering, their Courage and Magnanimity in death, their Temperance and Moderation, their Charity and Compaſſion, their Equality and Juſtice, and their Contempt of this World and all earthly concerns for the ſake and honour of their Maſter? Theſe were the vertues they were adorned with, which made

made the Heathen world, who hated the Doctrine they profeſſed, yet eſteem and reverence them. *Bonus vir* Cajus Sejus, *niſi Chriſtianus.*

Sect. 2.

Holineſs the condition of future Happineſs.

The deſire of Happineſs is ſo natural to all that partake of humane nature, that it can no more be ſeparate from it than heat can be from fire. 'Tis true, the miſtakes concerning happineſs are as numerous as dangerous; every one in this corrupt ſtate is apt to frame a happineſs which beſt ſuits his inclinations: but yet there is no man ſo devoid of reaſon, who doth not deſire to be happy; although indeed there be but a few who make uſe of the right means to attain to true felicity.

Daily experience puts it beyond doubt, that a carnal and fictitious felicity is by the unwiſe ſons of men purſued with the moſt indefatigable pains and induſtry poſſible. Now how ſtrange, to amazement, is it to think, that men ſhould be ſo ſedulous in hunting after a fancied felicity, and yet ſo negligent, ſo careleſs and unconcerned about a real happineſs which is both ſatisfying and laſting? *But*

But not to digreſs; that which I am now to urge, is: ſince happineſs is that which excites men to perform any thing chearfully in order to the attaining of it, how mightily ſhould the expectation of a future felicity induce them to the practice of Holineſs? for betwixt the two our bleſſed Saviour has made an inſeparable connexion, *Matth.* 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the pure in ſpirit, for they ſhall ſee God:* and indeed it is the height of folly and madneſs, for impure wretches to expect they ſhall be partakers of *the inheritance of the Saints of light*; for as the Apoſtle tells us, *There ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth*, Rev. 21. 27. Holineſs is the eſtabliſhed condition of happineſs, *Heb.* 12. 14. *Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God.* Hence is it that all the promiſes concerning our future felicity are onely made to thoſe men who *purifie themſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit*; and the great deſigne of them is to encourage us to Holineſs; upon which account St. *Paul* draws a very preſſing inference, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe promiſes*, (of which he ſpake in the foregoing Chapter) *let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.*

There

There is nothing more certain, than that onely holy ſouls are in a capacity of participating of that future felicity; and theſe may without the leaſt charge of preſumption claim an intereſt in it: But for thoſe vitious wretches, who are wholly polluted, who have devoted themſelves to commit ſin with greedineſs, and take pleaſure in doing evil; how utterly incapable are they (if they continue ſuch) to dwell in his preſence, *who is not a God that taketh pleaſure in wickedneſs?*

And now ſeeing there is ſuch an inſeparable connexion between Happineſs and Holineſs, it cannot be amiſs if we take a ſhort view of the excellency of this cœleſtial felicity, that it may more plainly appear what a notable encouragement and motive it is to holineſs.

There be two things that forcibly recommend the excellency of that future ſtate of bliſs. *Firſt*, A perfect freedom and immunity from all evils. And *Secondly*, a perpetual enjoyment of the chief good.

Firſt, it is a bleſſedneſs wholly exempt from evils whether of ſenſe or loſs; 'tis a happineſs attended with no inconveniencies, nor diſmal circumſtances, as the happieſt ſtate here is: we now walk in the midſt

midſt of perplexing doubts and fears; temptations increaſe our inquietudes, and dangers our continual fears: our complaints are by far more numerous than our joys; nay, what is our whole life, but a ſcene where ſorrow and fears act their parts! *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of evil.*

But our future bleſſedneſs quite excludes all thoſe evils; there is nothing admitted to imbitter that pleaſant ſtate, *Rev.* 21. 4. *And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed away.* The holy ſoul ſhall then no more complain of any dolorous hours; the heavenly *Jeruſalem* is a place unacquainted with every thing that is uneaſie and troubleſome.

And yet this is but the leaſt part of the Saints felicity: for as they ſhall enjoy a perfect freedom from evil, ſo ſhall they alſo be advanced to the fulleſt fruition of that God, where all the ſtreams of goodneſs do finally empty themſelves: *Bleſſed are the pure in ſpirit, for they ſhall ſee God*, Matth. 5. 8. They ſhall ſee him, not as now *through a Glaſs darkly*, but then *face to face*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. they ſhall, as the

the *Angels in heaven, always behold the face of their Father*, Matth. 18. 10. in whoſe *preſence* (as the Pſalmiſt aſſures us) *is fulneſs of joy, and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for evermore*, Pſal. 16. 11. O the unſpeakable delectability of the Saints future ſtate! where the moſt bleſſed God ſhines forth in his Glory, where the beams of beauty raviſh the beholders, who ſtand continually in his preſence receiving the manifeſtations of his Glory!

Sure if the faint expectation of enjoying the company of vertuous men in their fancied *Elyzium*, did inſtigate ſome Heathens to imitate their vertues; how much more perſwaſive ſhould the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, and the City of the living God be? where the holy Soul ſhall be admitted to converſe with an innumerable company of holy Angels, and taken into the bleſſed Society and Church of the firſtborn; where all thoſe imperfections that imbitter our communion here, are removed: where the holy Soul ſhall ſee *Jeſus the* bleſſed *Mediator of the new Covenant*, *Heb.* 12. who ſuffered ſo much for ſinners, now ſitting in glory and majeſty; not crowned (as once he was) with *thorns*, nor wearing a *purple robe*; but having on his

his head the moſt tranſplendent Diadem, and cloathed with Majeſty and Beauty. Methinks the thoughts of beholding this glory, and participating of ſo much felicity, ſhould excite the moſt lazie to follow Holineſs, and to walk worthy of him who hath called us to his Kingdom and glory.

But I confeſs I am not able to expreſs half of the glory of that future felicity: The bleſſed Apoſtle ſeems to intimate, that all Hyperbolical expreſſions fall ſhort in deſcribing it, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. where he ſtiles it, *A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:* and 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. he tells us, *Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive what God hath pepared for thoſe that love him.* For although we may be aſſured that the reward is of infinite value, and that *the righteous ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father:* yet the moſt glorious part is hid from the eyes of viators; 'tis onely thoſe who taſte the Honey-comb that can beſt diſcover its ſweetneſs.

And yet it is prodigiouſly ſtrange that the imperfect glance of future Glory that men may here behold, is ſo ineffectual to form them to Holineſs; that men who know

know they may be for ever happy, if they would ſtudy and endeavour to be holy in all manner of converſation, yet live as if they thought ſuch a happy ſtate not worthy to be noticed.

I confeſs, if the faithful and true God had not promiſed this ſtate of bleſſedneſs, and diſcovered by revelation the truth and reality of it, we could never have dreamed of partaking of ſo much happineſs. The Heathen world could never be aſcertained (by Natures dim light) that the Soul is beyond all doubt immortal, and that there is a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. The wiſeſt of their Philoſophers, by their moſt laborious ſearch, were exceedingly confuſed in their thoughts about it, and could at the moſt onely entertain ſome probable gueſſes and conjectures, founded upon moral arguments, which could never perfectly conquer their doubts: They did indeed think it was very reaſonable to believe that God (who is holy, juſt, and good) would in another life (ſince he did it not in this) reward good men, and puniſh the bad; but they could not be, beyond all doubt, aſcertained that it would be ſo. The moſt celebrated *Socrates*, who parted with this life in expectation of a better, plainly told his

his Friends, it was God onely who knew whether there were a future felicity or not; much leſs could either he or any other, without revelation, diſcover the nature and quality of the bleſſedneſs of that future ſtate. And indeed, although they entertained ſome imperfect notions of a future life of bliſs for the Soul, yet they never thought of the reſurrection of the Body: although 'tis true, the felicity they formed, was more congruous by far to ſatisfie ſenſual appetites than rational Souls: the Poets *Elyzium* being much of the ſame nature with the *Mahometan Paradiſe*, exactly accommodated to their fleſh and ſenſes.

In theſe thick clouds of darkneſs and ignorance did the wiſeſt of the Heathens walk: Exceedingly perplexed they were what to think, their doubts being greater than their hopes. But the ariſing of the *Sunſhine of Righteouſneſs* hath wholly diſpelled all that darkneſs; the Goſpel hath *brought life and immortality to light*, 2 Tim. 1. 10. and hath undoubtedly aſſured us that there is a reward for the Righteous, and that Holineſs ſhall be crowned with Happineſs.

Sect. 3.

Holineſs the onely ſafe way to eſcape the wrath to come.

Fear is a paſſion ſo extreamly violent, and repugnant to Humane nature, that nothing imaginable is of more force to conquer the unruly wills of men to duty. Hence is it, that even humane Laws are much more ſecured by puniſhments than rewards: Therefore if the promiſe of Heaven be not forcible enough to work upon our rebellious Wills, we have a Map of eternal and intolerable torments to excite our fear, and to affright us from the commiſſion of thoſe ſins *that lead down to the chambers of death*; and that drawn ſo exactly, that it is the greateſt miracle, that men will notwithſtanding ſlight *Holineſs*, which is the onely means to evite theſe laſting tortures.

In ſacred Writ, the torments of the damned are repreſented by ſuch terrifying expreſſions, that it is a wonder they impreſs not a fear and terrour upon the moſt daring ſinner. The Apoſtle St. *Jude* deſcribing Hell, calls it, *The vengeance of eternal fire*, and *the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*, Jude 7, 13. And the Apoſtle St. *John*

St. *John* calls it, *A lake of fire and brimſtone*, Rev. 20. 10, 15. Our Saviour more emphatically deſcribes it to be *A fire that can never be quenched, and where the worm dieth not*, Mark 9. 46. All which phraſes do moſt ſignificantly expreſs the ſeverity and intolerableneſs of the torments: for what puniſhment is ſo terrible as that of *Fire?* and how unſpeakably does it inhance the miſery, in that it is *eternal?* and that too, as inflicted by an offended God, who is executing his vengeance upon ſinners.

Would God ſinners would ſeriouſly conſider whether they are able to endure the eternal pains of a gnawing Conſcience? or can patiently dwell with devouring Flames? Whether the momentary pleaſures of ſin, are to be balanced with thoſe furious reflections, thoſe horrid ſtings and intolerable tortures the damned ſuffer day and night, where nothing of life remains but the ſenſe of pain? Alas! will no argument prevail with men? how amazing is it to think that the everlaſting God has uſed all the methods of love to excite men to Holineſs, and to reclaim them from ſin, and all to no purpoſe? May I not well ſay to ſuch men, as St. *Paul* ſaid to the *Galatians*, *Unwiſe ſinners, who hath bewitched you?*

Did men ſeriouſly believe the threatnings of the Goſpel, I am ſure they would not, for the fulleſt enjoyment of carnal felicity, run the hazard *of dwelling with everlaſting burnings.* That man that ſoberly conſiders, *that the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men*, will, I think, eaſily be ſcared into reformation, and be thereby excited to be diligent in the purſuit of ſubſtantial Holineſs, which is the ſafe courſe to eſcape that wrath.

Alas! that men who are ſo wiſe and diligent in their ſecular concerns, ſhould prove ſo fooliſh, ſo remiſs and careleſs in matters of the greateſt weight, and which require the utmoſt diligence! That rational creatures ſhould ſo willingly purchaſe their own miſery, and be at ſo much pains to damn themſelves! 'Twill ſurely be an aggravating circumſtance of their miſery, to think that they might have been happy, if they had but taken as much pains to live holily, as they took in the purſuit of ſinful pleaſures. How aſtoniſhing a conſideration will it be to the damned, to think of their *treading under foot the Son of God*, and *their counting the blood of the Covenant whereby they were ſanctifi'd, an unholy thing?* Heb. 10. 29.

to

to think, that the time was, when they enjoyed not onely a poſſibility, but a fair probability alſo of eſcaping the fury and indignation of God!

But men will not believe that a merciful God will thus torment his creatures; that he who delights not in the death of ſinners, will execute his vengeance upon them. Alas! what deluſory imaginations are theſe? for although *fury is not in God*, yet his honour calls for the execution of Juſtice upon ungodly ſinners, *who obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus.* He has waited long upon ſinners, and has fully teſtified that he is a God long ſuffering, and ſlow to wrath: He has not inſtantly reſented every injury offered to him; but day from day has been intreating ſinners to turn from the evil of their ways: and now ſeeing *they ſet at nought all his counſel, and will not hearken to his reproof*, what wonder is it though he *laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh?* Prov. 1. 25, 26. How heavy is that threatning, *Deut.* 28. 63. *As the Lord rejoyced over you to do you Good: ſo the Lord will rejoyce over you to deſtroy you?*

To compleat the miſery of the damned, beſides the intolerable and eternal pains

they endure, we may alſo adde that celeſtial felicity they are for ever excluded from. How tormenting will it be to think of an everlaſting ſeparation from the divine Preſence, and inſtead of a holy Society, to keep a continual correſpondency with impure Spirits?

Would God that this brief diſcovery of the powers of the world to come, might prevail with men to be holy in all manner of converſation.

But methinks I hear the over-zealous Profeſſor too ignorantly objecting, that it is ſervile, mercenary, and legal, to be holy for love of Heaven, or fear of Hell. Truely if it were ſo as theſe men teach, I know not what can be the intent and deſigne of all the promiſes and threatnings of the Goſpel. And although I queſtion not but it is a generous and Chriſtian principle, to ſerve God out of pure love; yet I can never be induced to think, that to be holy for love of Heaven and fear of Hell, can be ſeparate from that principle of love to God.

God knows how much in need men ſtand, both of arguments to work upon their *hope* and *fear*, to excite them to *duty*. And ſince he who knows our natures, has uſed promiſes to allure us, and threat-

threatnings to awaken us, we muſt not pretend to be wiſer than God, and reject thoſe motives he has thought fit to preſcribe: and indeed, if it were not for the fear of evil, and the hope of good, 'tis to be feared, the preſſing of other motives ſhould be but a mere beating of the Air.

But that this is not ſervile and mercenary, needs no other argument to prove it, but our Saviour's enduring the Croſs, and deſpiſing the Shame, *for the joy that was ſet before him*; a Scripture ſufficient enough to ſtop the mouths of all opponents.

SECT. 4.

Holineſs the main deſigne of the Goſpel, and the end of all Chriſts ſufferings.

Subjects who know the intent and deſigne of thoſe Laws iſſued forth by their Prince, will be loath to contemn his Authority, eſpecially when the whole intent of theſe is to make them by their obedience the more happy; and ſure 'tis the moſt unaccountable thing that can be, if they notwithſtanding deſpiſe his Laws, and quite counter-act his deſigne.

Now the main deſigne of the Chriſtian

precepts, is the promoting of Holineſs, and planting a good life in men: This alſo was the onely intent of our Sovereign and Law-giver; and it is certain the whole advantage redounds to us. How impious then is it to deſpiſe the Authority of Heaven? If God had made Holineſs a matter of indifferency, the want of ſuch a qualification had not been criminal: but ſince ſacred Writ has declared, *That this is the will of God, even our ſanctification*, and that *we muſt be holy as he is holy*; if we rebel, the indignity and contempt we caſt upon him, is inſufferable.

I have already ſhewed, that it is the great deſign of the Goſpel-precepts, Promiſes, & Threatings, to exalt Holineſs. Hence the Apoſtle very aptly calls it, *A doctrine according to godlineſs*: and he tells us, that the deſign of it is, *to teach men to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*: and the character of its nature is, *to turn men from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and an inheritance among them that are ſanctified by faith in Chriſt.*

I wiſh the effect were anſwerable to the deſigne. I doubt not but the Goſpel has had

had a kindly influence upon ſome, to form them to Holineſs, I would fain wiſh upon all: But alas! the perverſe and corrupt converſations of men plainly tell us, that there are but a few who have anſwered its deſigne.

In the next place, it were eaſie to demonſtrate, that to plant Holineſs amongſt men, was the end of Chriſts deſcending from Heaven to Earth, and of all that he ſuffered. This the Apoſtle plainly enough holds forth, *Tit.* 2. 14. *He gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and puriſie unto himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works.* Now what argument ſhould be ſo powerful and prevalent to engage Chriſtians to be univerſally holy, as the due conſideration of Chriſt's redeeming them for that end?

Men who are indu'd with any ſparks of ingenuity, cannot but be inſpirited to be ſeparate from the pollutions of this world, when they reflect what their Redeemer hath ſuffered in oder to the purchaſing of their pardon and reconciliation: For when poor Man had caſt himſelf headlong from Heaven to Earth, had loſt his priſtine purity, and ſubjugated himſelf to the cruel tyranny and dominion of ſin; in this deplorable ſtate being utterly unable to help

help himſelf, our bleſſed Lord redeemed us from our captivity, by offering up himſelf a ranſom to ſatisfie divine Juſtice; and all this, that we might walk in newneſs of life. And now what ingratitude is it to deſpiſe ſo much love? Sure, *If he that deſpiſed Moſes law died without mercy, of how much ſorer puniſhment ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was ſanctified an unholy thing?* Heb. 10. 28, 29.

He muſt certainly be of a very baſe and diſingenuous ſpirit, who takes pleaſure in ſin, when he conſiders how dearly Chriſt paid for it. Hath he been at ſo much pains, undergone ſuch diſmal ſufferings to purchaſe our peace, and will we notwithſtanding fruſtrate his deſigne? how ſtrange to aſtoniſhment is this, that men ſhould prefer captivity to freedom?

Alas! is it not enough that our bleſſed Maſter was ſo barbarouſly and deſpitefully uſed by the Jews and Roman Souldiers, but muſt we be alſo Actors in the Tragedy, and by our ſins crucifie him again?

Did he not die that we might live? and ſhall we ſpend our life in offering deſpite

deſpite unto him? Strange, that ſo much madneſs ſhould lodge in the breaſts of any into whom God hath breathed the breath of life!

I might here alſo adde, that it is a contemning, and offering of the greateſt deſpite to the *Holy Spirit*, to deſpiſe Holineſs: for upon this account is the third perſon of the bleſſed Trinity called *the Holy Ghoſt*, becauſe his peculiar office is to enable us to perform holy actions: now if we continue in our rebellion, if we reject the offers of grace, and the internal motions of the Spirit to Holineſs, we do hereby become guilty of quenching the Spirit of God, and offering deſpite unto him; which is ſo horrid a piece of villany, that Heaven threatens it with the ſevereſt torments.

SECT. 5.

Holineſs the moſt proper and effectual means for attaining length of days.

Of all outward and temporal bleſſings, *length of days* hath juſtly the precedency, ſince without this all others can afford little or no comfort: The poſſeſſion and enjoyment of other mercies, can beſtow no ſatisfaction to men lying on their beds of

of languiſhing: nay, there is no comfort, be it never ſo great, but men would willingly quit with, to acquire this. Now ſince this is above all things ſo univerſally deſired, it cannot but very much enhance the value of Holineſs, to demonſtrate that there is nothing ſo proper, nor more effectual to procure length of days than this.

In order to my proving of this, I ſhall firſt make it plain from Scripture, that length of days is due to holy men by vertue of the many true and faithful promiſes; and ſecondly, I ſhall appeal to common experience to determine the caſe.

Firſt, there is nothing more evidently aſſerted in Scripture, than that Holineſs hath the promiſe of length of days annexed to it, *Prov.* 3. 1, 2. *My ſon, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments; for length of days and long life ſhall they adde unto thee.* This encouraging motive is preſſed very effectually by *Moſes*, in his exhortation to obedience, *Deut.* 4. 40. *Thou ſhalt keep therefore his ſtatutes and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou maiſt prolong*

prolong thy days upon the earth. Upon this account we alſo finde that there are many promiſes of this nature to obedient Children, *Exod.* 20. 12. *Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

And as *Righteouſneſs tendeth to life,* (as the Wiſe man obſerves) ſo *he that purſueth evil purſueth it to his own death,* Prov. 11. 19. There is nothing more evident from Scripture, than that ſin hath a natural tendency to ſhorten mens lives; nay, the great God, who is ſerious in his threatnings, hath aſſured us it is ſo: upon which account we may well conclude with the Wiſe man, *Prov.* 10. 27. *The years of the wicked ſhall be ſhortned.*

The whole tenour of the Scripture abounds with many ſuch promiſes and threatnings; and the thing is ſo plain, that I need not ſtand to tranſcribe many texts.

But beſides Scripture, this truth is alſo plainly atteſted by common experience: for if we examine who are the men who for ordinary are moſt obnoxious to diſeaſes, and live ſhorteſt; we ſhall finde it true enough, that the vitious are the men, *who live not out half their days,*

Prov.

Prov. 23. 29, 30. *Who hath woe? who hath ſorrow? who hath wounds without cauſe? they that tarry long at the wine*, &c. Holineſs is repugnant and inconſiſtent with exceſs, which naturally puts a period to the lives of men: It forbids all manner of vice, which *leads down to the chambers of death*; and keeps men within due bounds in their eating and drinking.

Before mankinde had corrupted themſelves by their notorious and impudent vitiouſneſs, we read of their great length of days; but the increaſe of ſin multiplied diſeaſes, which hurry men to untimely deaths.

I deny not but the great Lord and Maſter of the Univerſe may, for holy and wiſe ends known unto himſelf, cut ſhort the lives of the righteous; yet ſurely if we conſult either Experience or Reaſon, we ſhall finde it certain beyond doubt, that vertuous men enjoy, for ordinary, far the longeſt lives.

Some good men may be naturally of a brittle conſtitution, yet how ſtrangely has their life been protracted by their moderation and ſobriety? and how many ſtrong men have had their days ſhortened by their intemperance and exceſs?

Indeed

Indeed, he that conſiders this well, ſhall finde, that Holineſs is the moſt effectual means to promote long life, both upon a moral and natural account. Upon a *moral* account, long life is the reward which the divine promiſes do ſecure to ſuch men; and on the contrary, wickedneſs is threatned with ſhortneſs of days. Upon a *natural* account, the fire doth not more naturally produce heat, than Holineſs does procure health and length of days; and there is nothing more evident, than that the moſt of vices have a phyſical efficacy in the ſhortening of humane life. That this is the neceſſary product and genuine effect of intemperance and laſciviouſneſs, needs no other argument to prove it, but the daily examples of multitudes, whom thoſe ſins have hurried to their graves. And truely there is not any vice which does not like fire in mens boſoms torture and conſume them; and ſo diſorders and diſcompoſes them, that they even neglect the neceſſary means of their health. See *Period of Humane life*, pag. 111, 124. Edit. 2.

SECT.

Sect. 6.

Holineſs that which makes men honourable; vice rendering men mean and ignoble.

Honour is an ornament ſo noble and venerable, that he is but very ſottiſh, if not quite bruitiſh, who doth not court and careſs it. Upon this account it is nothing ſtrange, that ancient Philoſophers, who wanted the aſſiſtance of revelation, placed mans happineſs in it.

How many brave and gallant actions have been performed, which if they had wanted the bait of Honour had never been attempted! Gallant ſouls, who deſpiſe all other rewards, have been hereby excited to undergo the greateſt dangers.

Now, ſince honour is ſo highly eſteemed, eſpecially by thoſe who pretend to generoſitie; I ſhall, to encourage ſuch to befriend Holineſs, endeavour to prove, that the moſt effectual means to procure Honour, and to be in eſteem both with God and man, is *to live* (as the Apoſtle adviſeth men) *ſoberly, righteoouſly, and godly.*

Onely before I proceed to prove this, I ſhall premiſe one Caution, namely, that by

by *Honour* I do not chiefly underſtand one dignified with any extrinſecal honour ariſing either from his Birth or Office; though both theſe are to be highly eſteemed, and muſt not be denied that external reſpect due unto them: but by *Honour* I underſtand that eſteem and reputation that the beſt and wiſeſt men do give to any whoſe Moral honour is conſpicuous; and under this notion the Stoick-Moraliſt hath very well expreſſed it,

Nobilitas ſola eſt atque unica virtus.

which upon the matter diſagrees not much from that ſacred poſition of the Wiſe man, *Prov.* 22. 1. *A good name is rather to be choſen than great riches.*

Having premiſed this, I come now to prove that Holineſs is the path-way to Honour. And indeed, this is ſo plainly aſſerted in Scripture, that it is needleſs to inſiſt. The God of Heaven hath aſſured us, that thoſe that *Honour him, he will honour; and thoſe that deſpiſe him ſhall be lightly eſteemed,* 1 Sam. 2. 30. Much like to this, is that inducement to Holineſs urged by our Lord Chriſt, *Joh.* 12. 26. *If any man ſerve me, him will my Father honour.* Now men cannot honour God

more, than by being holy: for the word is comprehenſive, and includes all thoſe duties that God hath enjoyned; but every vice is a deſpiſing of his ſacred Authority. If then holy men are thoſe onely whom God will honour, and vitious men thoſe whom he will contemn, we may eaſily conclude, who are the honourable, and who are the baſe and ignoble. Sure thoſe men muſt be honourable, whom the Fountain of Honour eſteems ſuch.

'Tis upon this account that the Saints are called (in Scripture) *the excellent of the earth*, and *the worthies of the world*, (how meanly ſoever men eſteem them) *of whom the world is not worthy:* And the righteous is ſaid to be *more excellent than his neighbour.* And indeed, Holineſs doth not onely promote the honour and eſteem of private perſons, but of publick Communities and Kingdoms alſo, *Prov.* 14. 34. *Righteouſneſs exalteth a nation; but ſin is a reproach to any people.*

This is a truth which the wiſeſt of the Heathens, who yet wanted Revelation, conſtantly taught, namely, That *Honour is the reward of vertue.* Hence the large Lectures they have written in the commendation thereof: it would be too tedious

tedious to tranſcribe even the Elogies that they have written in the praiſe of Vertue; and indeed it is well worthy of our obſervation, that as they have illuſtrated Vertue by their large Encomiums of it, ſo Vertue (which they courted) hath made them venerable to poſterity, and tranſmitted to us their memories under the moſt amiable Encomiums imaginable: And however their birth was but mean and almoſt regardleſs, yet their vertues have made them more famous than Princes and Emperours. The vertues of *Ariſtides*, *Socrates*, *Seneca*, *Marcus Regulus*, and many others, have made their renown glorious; whileas many Emperours and great men have had their names buried in ſilence.

Let a man be as rich as ever any of *Adam*'s poſterity was, or (that I may extend it farther) as high as his ambitious thoughts can wiſh; let him be wiſe as *Solomon*, and endued with all other perfections and advantages; yet if he want vertue, how inſipid will his Name be to poſterity? It is Vertue alone that conduceth to fame. 'Tis true, ſome wicked men (called in Scripture vile, notwithſtanding their authority) have been ſet in high places, and honoured for fear,

when alive; yet they never received that honour which hath in all ages accompanied the Righteous. They have had the external, (which is indeed due to men by vertue of their Deſcent or Office) but wanted that internal reverence and honour which is onely due to good men: and I doubt not to ſay, that there is nothing more incongruous and unſuitable, than to ſee Honour given to ſuch men. *As ſnow in ſummer, and as rain in harveſt; ſo honour is not ſeemly for a fool,* Prov. 26. 1.

Vice is in the judgement of all conſidering men ſo mean and baſe, that it caſts a ſtain and reproach upon men; makes their names unſavory, and ſtink in the noſtrils of after-ages: but Holineſs forces a veneration from men, and makes poſterity raiſe Elogies in their memory; *but the memory of the wicked ſhall be forgotten.*

Virtue was that alone whereby many Kingdoms and Empires have been raiſed; was that which made them ſo flouriſhing and potent, and prevailed more to their eſtabliſhment and advancement, than Strength or Policy. Thus it was with the old *Romans*, (for their vertues are a ſhame to the preſent ſtate of that Empire)

pire) their Clemencie and Juſtice conquered Kingdoms, and made *Rome* renowned and glorious beyond all other Kingdoms and Commonwealths: and as Vertue hath raiſed *Kingdoms*, ſo hath it alſo particular *Perſons*; whileas Vice hath caſt Emperours from their Thrones, and made them as unfortunate as they were wicked.

Many of the primitive Martyrs, who were renowned by Kingdoms and Commonwealths (who keep Feſtivals in honour of their memories) were but of an inferiour degree, and had nothing to recommend them to poſterity but their Holineſs and Sanctity; and indeed, any man that conſults Reaſon, will eaſily finde himſelf conſtrained to reverence and eſteem vertuous men.

'Tis a wonder that any man who pretends to generoſity ſhould be vitious, there being nothing ſo mean and baſe as Vice, which like to cowards always lurketh, and dares not approach the light. I doubt not but this preſent age hath arrived at as high a confidence in proclaiming their ſins as *Sodom*, as ever any former age acquired; and it may (to the reproach of it) be ſaid, as ever any is like to reach to: yet till men caſt quite

off humanity, it cannot be expected that Vice ſhall have Advocates to plead in its defence. 'Tis a noble ſaying of the great Moraliſt *Seneca*; *Licet Deus neſciret nec homo puniret peccatum, non tamen peccarem ob peccati vilitatem.*

'*Tis* no wonder then though Vice appear (as the Devil in *Samuel*'s mantle) under the cloak of Vertue; though Luſt maſk it ſelf with the pretence of Love, and Cruelty of Zeal: but by this means it proclaims its timorouſneſs, not daring to own publickly what it really is.

It were a large field, to deſcend to the conſideration of every particular vertue and vice, and to ſhew that there is not any vertue but tends to the advancement of a mans honour and fame, and no vice which is not ungentile, mean, and baſe: But the brevity I have deſigned will not allow me to enlarge; onely in brief I ſhall demonſtrate the truth of this by ſome few Inſtances.

Juſtice is ſo gallant a vertue, that it advanced the renown of thoſe whom it adorned, beyond what riches or preferment could ever beſtow. The *Romans* were more famous, and (where they were Enemies) more formidable for their Juſtice than their Power: it was this vertue which

which in a peculiar manner made Scepters and Kingdoms ſubmit to their Government. But *Injuſtice* is ſo baſe and contemptible a vice, that it hath made thoſe who are captivated by it, deſpiſed as the unworthieſt of men, not deſerving to be taken into friendſhip, but to be excluded from humane Societies. How unſavory hath the name of unjuſt Judges been to poſterity, while every one is ready to ſtrew ſome Elogies in honour of the juſt!

To this I may annex *Conſtancy in friendſhip*, as a vertue as noble as amiable: For who will not admire and celebrate the man who remains fixt to his friend, whatever alterations or changes there may be in his condition? And ſure whoſoever fails in his friendſhip, lays himſelf open to the moſt mercileſs condition, and needs expect to be left to befriend himſelf when the wheel of Providence laies him below thoſe he thought unworthy of his favour.

Of all vertues, Liberality, Charity, and Compaſſion are ſo noble, that common ſpeech adapts this Elogie to them by way of emphaſis; and indeed, I think I need not ſay much to raiſe an eſtimate of theſe: for no man can be ſo baſe as to deſpiſe

thoſe who beſtow favours upon him. Sure there is no vertue that makes men more famous, that wins the hearts and affections of people more, than Liberality: but *Avarice* is ungentile and ſordid; and ſo odious a vice, that it ever leſſens all other vertues, and makes thoſe it poſſeſſes the moſt hateful of men.

Charity is an obliging vertue; and as it hath its original from, ſo doth it alſo neceſſarily produce Love, and eſteem too: he who prefers the neceſſities of others before his own ſuperfluities, and who does ſupply the wants of others, does ſo chear the languiſhing hearts of the needy, that nothing can be more generous, nor generally meets with a greater recompence of honour and eſteem.

To compaſſionate the caſe of the Fatherleſs, of the Poor and Needy, is ſo noble a vertue, that the Apoſtle makes this qualification alone the evidence of *pure and undefiled religion.* It is a moſt unnatural and more than bruitiſh ſin, to ſlight and forget ſuch.

Meekneſs and *Humility* are ſuch noble embelliſhments of humane nature, as I have formerly ſhewed, that none but proud and inſolent ſpirits, who have been always condemned as inſufferable, durſt ever diſeſteem them.

To

To theſe I may joyn *Affability* or *Courteſie*, as a vertue near allied to Humility and Meekneſs; which being noble in its cauſes and effects, cannot but denominate the perſon it illuſtrates both noble, and amiable, and lovely: 'Tis indeed an evidence of a very baſe and abject ſpirit, to be ſullen and moroſe. Perſons of a noble education and original, are frequently known by their condeſcending and obliging behaviour; and I am ſure Reputation and Eſteem are the apparent effects of Courteſie.

Temperance, and *Moderation* are vertues more noble than that they need eloquence to advance their value, as its contraries are too mean and beaſtly to be inveighed againſt. How bruitiſh and contemptible is a drunken man, who is rather an object of pity, (as mad-men are) than reproach; who being a more apt reſemblance of a beaſt than a man, deſerves as little Honour, as he is ignorant what Honour means?

SECT.

SECT. 7.

Holineſs attended with the moſt ſolid and real pleaſures.

In all things that concern practice, there is ſcarce any motive more forcible than Pleaſure; and of all pleaſures, thoſe that entertain the Soul are the moſt excellent. We indeed need no argument but experience, to demonſtrate how raviſhing ſenſual pleaſures and delights are, how much they are careſſed and courted, till men be glutted and filled with them. But alas! how inconſiderable are all ſenſitive delights? the enjoyment of theſe cannot raiſe us above *the beaſts that periſh*; but thoſe pleaſures which are fitted for the rational nature, are noble and laſting; and ſuch are all thoſe delights that ariſe from a holy converſation; no joy, without this, being able to make a mans life pleaſant and delightful.

There is in Holineſs an internal delectability, that is better felt, than it can be expreſſed; but how loathſome and odious is Vice? it is compared in Scripture to the moſt ugly and unpleaſant things: But Holineſs is ſo comely, ſo delightful, and raviſhing, that it is very fitly (accor-

cording to the Scripture-Epithet of it) called, *the Beauty of Holineſs.* It is this alone that produces a calm and ſerene Conſcience; from which neceſſarily reſults acquieſcence and delight: and indeed, this is no fantaſtick and imaginary joy, (as the Atheiſts of this Age would make men believe) but a true and real one, affording much more complacency and ſatisfaction, than all the pleaſures of ſenſe. To the truth of which, I doubt not but thoſe men who queſtion it ſhould aſſent, if they would but make the experiment; and till they do this, they give us too evident an inſtance of their folly, in denying the reality of thoſe raptures of joy reſulting from a holy converſation.

But beſides Experience, this truth is likewiſe confirmed by Reaſon: For who is in more probable circumſtances to participate of pleaſures, than he who is Maſter of his Paſſions, who hath ſubdued his appetites, and freed himſelf from thoſe imperious Lords, who denied him the liberty of taſting and reliſhing pleaſures? The pious Soul may have no large allowance of temporal mercies; yet having Contentment, he is richer than the wicked man whoſe coffers are full.

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But we need not doubt of the reality of thoſe pleaſures; the Wiſe man hath long ſince put this out of queſtion, *Prov. 3. 17. Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs.* There is here a concurrence of all thoſe circumſtances that contribute to make any thing delectable: 'tis a way pleaſant for its plainneſs, and deſirable for its end. There is not indeed any thing wanting in it, that uſually draws out mens delight.

All beauty falls inconceivably ſhort of this; it being Holineſs alone, that makes the righteous *ſhine forth as the ſun in the Kingdom of their Father:* without this, all natural comelineſs is imperfect, and, as the Wiſe man expreſſes it, *is deceitful and vain*, Prov. 31. 30.

And yet what an univerſal Empreſs is external beauty become? nothing being of equal force to attract the eye of beholders as it doth. How hath ſhe conquered the mighty, and made the Nobles of the Earth Vaſſals to lacquey after her? There is an almoſt irreſiſtible power and force in her charmings, which conquereth the hearts of men inſenſibly.

Now if Beauty mixed with ſo much deformity, accompanied with ſo much attendance and ſlavery, be ſo enchanting and

and attractive; how much more powerfully ſhould the Beauty of Holineſs, which is every whit perfect and unſpotted, and attended with no diſmal accidents, raiſe our admiration, and make us ſay (as *David* of *Goliah*'s Sword) *There is none like it?*

Alas! all earthly beauty will be quickly laid in the duſt! a little time will deface the faireſt face, and make its beauty conſume like a Moth: an unexpected accident may disfigure it, and marre the moſt lovely features; and there is no doubt but old Age, which draws on apace, will make wrinkles in the ſmootheſt face, and make it wither as a flower: But the Beauty of Holineſs is laſting; it fades not with time, nor can it be impaired by the moſt loathſome and nauſeating diſeaſe.

Since then Pleaſure is ſo ready to excite our affections, and draw out our complacency, 'tis pity that the nobleſt, the moſt ſatisfying, and the moſt laſting ſhould be ſo much contemned. *Eccl.* 5. 10. *He that loveth ſilver, ſhall not be ſatisfied with ſilver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increaſe.* All the careſſes of this World are unable to ſatisfie the Soul; but how raviſhing are the joys of a holy converſation? The pleaſures of this world

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are ſhort and momentary, are onely (as the Apoſtle phraſeth them) for a *ſeaſon*, which quickly paſſeth; but the joy of the Holy Ghoſt is as laſting as unſpeakable; and *this joy* (ſaith Chriſt to his Diſciples) *no man ſhall take from you.* It is without the reach of the malice of men and Devils too.

Alas! how diminutive does it make the pleaſures of the wicked, to ſay they are ſhort? how exceedingly does this one circumſtance diminiſh them? But indeed this were not ſo very conſiderable, if there were a concurrence of no worſe circumſtances; but that which moſtly is an allay and damp to temporal pleaſures, is the conſequence, a painful and laſting eternity of the ſevereſt puniſhments. 'Tis this life that puts a period and concluſion to the joys of wicked men; whileas the pious have Rivers of pleaſures for evermore to delight and raviſh them: 'tis at Death that they *enter into the joy of their Lord.*

This is a ſubject ſo raviſhing and pleaſant, that I cannot without reluctancy conclude it. O how unſatisfactory are all the delights of Senſe, if compared with thoſe Spiritual Joys the holy Soul partakes of! The delights that the Drunkard hath

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in his Cups and Companions, the Covetous in his Riches, the Ambitious in his Preferments, *&c.* fall all incomparable ſhort of that joy that is the lot of the righteous.

The delights that the holy man enjoys do upon a double account far over-poiſe the tranſitory pleaſures of the wicked. *Firſt*, the preſent ſatisfaction that the holy Soul taſtes of in this valley of tears, is incomparably greater than the delights that ariſe from ſenſe. The ſoul that hath once taſted of the love of God, findes more pleaſure in the very acts of mutual love, than in all the feaſts of delight that ſenſe is capable to enjoy. Food is indeed ſweet to the hungry, and drink to thoſe who are languiſhing with thirſt: the taſte does without doubt finde ſome meats ſweet and reliſhing, even where there is no extremity of hunger, much more where it is: for, *to the hungry every bitter thing is ſweet.* Beauteous Sights raviſh the Eye, melodious Muſick the Ear, and Odoriferous things pleaſe the Smell: But alas! how far beyond theſe is the delight which the devout ſoul receives in Ordinances! the antipaſts of joy which their Heavenly Father beſtows upon them, are more delightful than the concurrence of

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all ſenſual pleaſures. The ſoul that is in trouble can fetch more conſolation from the promiſes of the Word, than the carnal man can from his pleaſures: *Unleſs thy Law had been my delight* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *I had periſhed in my affliction.* Other things could not avail him, they could afford no relief: but to have acceſs to God in prayer, and to pour out our complaints to our willing God, this is more raviſhing than I can expreſs. And I am ſure there is no man who hath taſted theſe joys, who would part with them for ſenſual pleaſures; and no man dare inveigh againſt thoſe ſpiritual delights, but *ſtrangers who intermeddle not with this joy.*

The very Heathens have taught us, that *Vertue is a reward to it ſelf*; they experimented more real ſatisfaction in moderation and temperance, than in Drinking and Whoring. But Chriſtianity gives us more uncontrolable evidences of the reality of that joy that good men even in this ſtate of abſence taſte of. Into what a rapture and unexpreſſible extaſie of joy did the abundance of revelation St. *Paul* met with put him! and the Apoſtle St. *Peter* was ſo tranſported with joy when he did ſee Chriſt in his Transfiguration,

ration, that he could not forbear crying, *Maſter, it is good being here.* How full of joy have Martyrs been in the midſt of the flames? what comforts have they even then expreſſed? And is not all this evidence, that the joy of holy men is more real, more ſweet and raviſhing, than the tranſitory pleaſures of the wicked, which in ſeveral ſeaſons can afford no delight? a little pain or diſeaſe is ſuch an allay and damp to their pleaſures, that it quite extirps them.

But beſides thoſe foretaſtes of joy that the holy Soul experiments here, which, as I have ſhewed, infinitely overwhelms all trouble and pain; that which contributes moſt to advance the joy of good men, are thoſe felicities above, which are prepared for them; and to theſe wicked men can lay no claim, their fartheſt proſpect being confined to temporal delights.

What abundance of delights and unexpreſſible pleaſures are laid up for the holy Soul above! How delectable will it be, to be conſtant reſidents in the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, whoſe Streets are pure Gold, and whoſe Gates are Pearl? how raviſhing will it be, to be always in his preſence, where there are Streams and

Rivers of perpetual pleaſures? How ſweet will it be, to be a member of that bleſſed Society of the firſt-born in Heaven, where there is a perfect concord and agreement? But I confeſs, I am not able to expreſs half the joy of this future felicity: *Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the hearts of men to conceive*, what a ſtore of happineſs God hath laid up in Heaven for thoſe who are *holy in all manner of converſation.*

Sect. 8.

Holineſs accompanied with Peace.

There is nothing more ſuitable to, and agreeable with Humane nature, than Peace; as thoſe who endure trouble and vexation can fully atteſt: Amongſt earthly bleſſings it deſerves not the laſt place, it being a mercy which crowns all others, and without which, the fulleſt fruition could not prove ſatisfactory.

Thoſe languiſhing, and much to be pitied, Kingdoms, which now lie bathed in blood, can atteſt the evils and miſchiefs of War, much more pathetically than words can expreſs. How ſweet and acceptable would Peace (a word always ſounding ſweetly) be to them? *Now*

Now the Apoſtle St. *James* hath given us a brief, but unqueſtionably true, account of the real cauſes of Wars and Fightings, *Jam.* 4. 1. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your luſts that war in your members?* From theſe ſinful cauſes have all the diſorders and jars in Kingdomes and private Societies had their real (I ſpeak not of their pretended) original. How impetuous are the luſts of turbulent ſpirits! like the raging waves of the Sea, they are ſtill in motion, caſting forth filth and dirt. *Ambition* is ſo unquiet and reſtleſs a paſſion, that no man is ignorant what deſolations it hath wrought in the earth: How many famous Kingdoms hath it ruined and deſtroyed? what inquietudes and diſorders are occaſioned by *diſcontentment?* All theſe are things ſo evident, that I need not enlarge upon them: but how repugnant are theſe vices to Holineſs? and can it be rationally imagined that their genuine and proper effects can be more reconcilable with it?

I confeſs, Religion hath too frequently been pretended as a Cloak to cover the greateſt Villanies, Confuſions, and Rebellions: but ſure I am, nothing imaginable

contains a greater contradiction, than to ſay theſe impieties have a warrant from the ſacred Laws of the Goſpel, the combination of which is the rule of Holineſs, as I have formerly explained. Is not Chriſt called *the Prince of Peace*, and the Goſpel, *the Goſpel of Peace?* and it is certain, if men would be ruled by the Laws of ſo peaceable a Prince, they ſhould be of a calm and quiet ſpirit: then ſhould we indeed ſee *Righteouſneſs and Peace kiſſing each other.*

When ever therefore we read in ancient propheſies of the great peace that ſhall be in the *Meſſiahs* reign, we muſt thereby underſtand, that the nature of the Goſpel and its precepts are ſuch, that if men would conform their lives to them, there ſhould be an univerſal Peace. How ſtrictly are all the cauſes of Envy, Contention, Ambition, and Rebellion, prohibited? and ſure if theſe cauſes were removed, their effect ſhould have no place: Then ſhould the *Bow* be *broken*, and the *Spear* cut in ſunder: *Swords* ſhould be turned into *Plough-ſhares*, and the Inſtruments of War into more neceſſary uſes: *War ſhould ceaſe unto the ends of the earth*, and *Peace ſhould be within each wall.*

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By this it is apparent how much holineſs conduceth to the eſtabliſhment of publick peace. But that which I would more eſpecially take notice of, is, the internal ſerenity and calmneſs of Conſcience, which is the onely effect of holineſs: and truely upon this account *there is no peace to the wicked.*

I might here appeal to every mans breaſt, whether Holineſs does not calm and quiet the Conſciences of men; whileas a natural horrour reſults from the commiſſion of vice, more heavy than the ſevereſt laſhes ever inflicted by *Cedi-tius* or *Rhadamanthus.* What unſpeakable peace and eaſe does attend holineſs of life! there is no jar nor contention, no check of Conſcience, nor wound of ſpirit, to diſturb the inward repoſe of the Righteous: but that remorſe that reſults from the commiſſion of ſin, even after men have acquired what they ſinfully luſted after, is like that hand-writing, *Dan.* 5. 5. which made the ſtout heart of *Belſhazzer* to tremble, and his knees to ſmite one againſt another: It troubles the thoughts of the moſt daring ſinner, and makes him a terrour to himſelf. There is no imaginable torment that can equal the terrours of an awakened guilty Con-

ſcience; it hath put men to chuſe ſtrangling and death rather than life: all which is fully verified by the Word of truth: *The ſpirit of a man can ſuſtain his infirmity; but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?*

O the ſecret pangs and fears that poſſeſs the ſpirits of wicked men! the ſevere checks and laſhes of Conſcience that ſeize upon tranſgreſſors, which all imaginable divertiſements cannot quite ſtifle and ſuppreſs! All the attendance of the moſt dear Relations cannot give eaſe and comfort to them. How diſmal and inconſolable was *Spira's* condition? how amazing are the very thoughts of thoſe gnawings and horrours of Conſcience he ſuffered? The fears and apprehenſions of a future miſery, mar all the joy and mirth of carnal men. In their moſt flouriſhing ſtate it continually haunts them, and ſo fills them with horror and inquietude, that they cannot quietly enjoy themſelves. Whilſt the Soul acts within the Body, it cannot but preſent thoſe horrid and diſquieting reflections,

Hi ſunt qui trepidant & ad omnia fulgora pallent.

Theſe are the men who in the midſt of outward

outward felicity are amazed with tormenting fears, which cannot be eradicated but by a ſincere repentance.

But the holy Soul, in the extremity of outward troubles, enjoys an internal calmneſs and quiet of minde: the very Pagan, who could not be beyond doubt aſſured of the certainty of a future reward, could yet ſay,

— *Hic murus ahenæus eſto,*
Nil conſcire ſibi, nulla paleſcere culpa.

But the Word of truth hath made this more unqueſtionably ſure: *Pſal.* 119. 165. *Great peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them.*

SECT. 9.

Holineſs the beſt evidence of true Wiſdom, and real Worth, and Courage.

Wiſdom and *Courage* having their riſe and ſource from nobler Principles than external helps, have therefore in all Ages been eſteemed excellent and venerable vertues; and much preferable to thoſe others which depend upon external advantages. *Wiſdom is* (as the Wiſe man ſpeaks) *the principal thing*, Prov. 4. 7.

It is that vertue which in a peculiar manner raiſeth the Humane nature above that of Bruits, who act without conſideration and counſel. And *Courage* is that which ſubdueth that ignoble paſſion of fear, which hindreth men from attempting actions praiſe-worthy. Hence it is, that to be called a Fool, or Coward, are ſuch reproachful denominations, that nothing imaginable is more ſhameful.

That Holineſs is an infallible evidence of true Wiſdom, is more plain than it can be doubted. In ſacred Writ, *Wiſdom* and *Religion* are uſed as convertible terms, as words expreſſing the ſame thing. *And unto man he ſaid, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom, and to depart from evil, that is underſtanding*, Job 28.28. Hence the impious and wicked are frequently called *Fools*, and men void of underſtanding and wiſdom. And however this prophane Age of ours hath accounted thoſe men great *wits*, who have caſt off all Religion, and who Burleſque Scripture; who think it the greateſt folly to be kept in awe by the fears of future danger, and to be kept in thraldom by the apprehenſion of an inviſible being: yet men who conſider things aright, have

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in all ages accounted thoſe Atheiſts both fools and mad-men.

Fools, in condemning that which all wiſe men have aſſented too. But 'tis no wonder, ſince ſin is that which overclouds and ſtupifies the judgement, and deprives them of thoſe intellectual abilities whereby men acquire a right judgement of things. Alas! why ſhould ſuch be accounted wiſe, who caſt themſelves in the dirt and puddle, who contaminate and pollute their Souls, who prefer a temporal to an eternal felicity, who blindly and inconſiderately expoſe themſelves to the wrath of a God revenging ſin? Sure the greateſt Idiots are not comparably ſo unwiſe as theſe men, who venture their Souls upon ſuch hazards.

There is nothing that doth ſo much debaſe Humane nature, as ſin: the Pſalmiſt, who but upon a ſurpriſal vented his impatience and envy, yet characterizeth himſelf a fool for doing ſo, *Pſal.* 73. 22. *So fooliſh was I, and ignorant: I was as a beaſt before thee.* 'Tis Religion alone that is the moſt certain and uncontrovertable difference betwixt men and bruits. The very Pagan Satyriſt could ſay,

--- *Sepa-*

——— Separat hæc nos
A grege brutorum ———

Reaſon will eaſily convince every man that will but take pains to conſider, that thoſe men who neglect their greateſt intereſt, can never ſhun to be eſteemed fools. Now to be ſerious and careful about the Soul, to be aſcertained how it ſhall go with us in the other world, this is the greateſt concern of man, about which the greateſt care and diligence poſſible is little enough: and ſure thoſe men who deſigne happineſs (a thing implanted in the natures of men) muſt either make uſe of the right means in order to their acquiring of it, otherwiſe they too plainly proclaim their folly: but the holy Soul makes Religion its whole buſineſs; he knows that it is his greateſt intereſt to be holy, and that without this he can never expect to be happy hereafter. And indeed, whatever may be the preſent apprehenſions and thoughts of men, yet they ſhall ere long paſs this verdict of circumſpect walkers, That they were the onely wiſe men: and the God of wiſdom, who can give the beſt judgement in the caſe, does account the Saints to be wiſe men.

men. Let us then hearken to the Apoſtles advice, *Eph.* 5. 15. *See that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe.*

But as Holineſs doth thus entitle men to *wiſdom*, ſo doth it alſo promote true *valour*; it mightily conduceth to inſpirit men with courage and magnanimity: *The righteous are bold like a lyon; but the wicked flee when no man purſueth.* And the reaſon of both is plain: the one hath ſecured his future ſtate; but the other expects no better inheritance. And however wicked men may be very daring, yet they cannot be ſaid to be truely valiant; for this is always rational and deliberate: but if wicked men ſhould ſoberly conſider the unſpeakable hazard they run upon, they durſt not be ſo daring; for what conſidering man would thus expoſe himſelf to danger to be eſteemed gallant, who knows if he miſcarry he is everlaſtingly miſerable? If this merits the Encomium of courage, why may not thoſe mad-men who inconſiderately expoſe themſelves to danger, be alſo accounted valiant? Nay, the Horſe that undauntedly, but inconſiderately, runs ſo many dangers, encounters ſo many perils in battle, may be as truely ſaid to be valiant, as thoſe men: But this is to miſtake quite the true notion of courage, *That*

That man that is affrighted with a ſmall danger becauſe it is preſent, but nothing amazed with a future danger which is certain and intolerable, is certainly both Fool and Coward. A *Fool*, in judging ſo badly, and miſtaking his own intereſt and well-being: A *Coward*, in being afraid for a danger becauſe it is preſent. He who runs from his Colours in time of Battle, proclaims himſelf to be a coward, although thereby he expoſeth himſelf to a greater danger if he be apprehended, even the ſevere Sentence of the Martial Law juſtly inflicted upon Fugitives. How then can thoſe men be accounted valiant, who for fear of ſome ſmall danger they may run the hazard of here for Holineſs, expoſe themſelves to thoſe vials of fury which is the portion of ungodly men hereafter?

SECT. 10.

Holineſs univerſally profitable, and above all things moſt advantageous.

In all ſecular affairs that concern practice, Gain and Advantage is the great argument and attracting inducement that prevails upon men; it is like oyl to the wheel, making its motion more eaſie and ſwift.

ſwift. There is no danger ſo terrifying, but men have hazarded on, who have had this motive to animate them: this is it that prompts the Mariner to expoſe himſelf to the dangers of the mercileſs Ocean, that excites Servants to toil ſo induſtriouſly, and encourageth Souldiers to fight battles.

That men may alſo be inſpirited and allured to court Holineſs upon the account of its utility and profit, I ſhall (abſtracting from thoſe advantages I have already inſtanced) now briefly diſcover, that Holineſs is, *firſt*, profitable to men in every condition and ſtate. *Secondly*, that it is attended with all outward bleſſings, and wants not a claim to a temporal felicity. *Thirdly*, That without it all other mercies are uſeleſs, and unable to quiet the Soul. *Fourthly*, That it is the moſt incomparable bleſſing, and frees the Soul from the worſt of evils. *Fifthly*, That it is the beſt evidence of our being in favour with God, and of our adoption to Gods Family. And *Laſtly*, That it is the beſt cordial againſt the fears of death, and affords the greateſt ſatisfaction to men lying on their beds of languiſhing.

That Holineſs is profitable and advantageous

That Holineſs is profitable and advantageous to men in every condition and ſtate, ſeems to be clearly enough aſſerted by the Apoſtle, when he ſays, *Godlineſs is profitable for all things.* But beſides Scripture, Experience and Reaſon do joyntly agree in the proof of this. That man that is advanced above others in riches, has no ground to expect honour and reverence from men, if he walk not according to the rule of Holineſs; that is, if he be not moderate and compaſſionate, if he reſtrains not his ambition and pride: And ſure, without this love and reverence from others, his condition is not very happy, he lies expoſed to infinite dangers.

Again, if a man be expoſed to a mean and adverſe eſtate, is environed with an infinite number of perplexing difficulties; yet this caſe is not altogether hopeleſs: for if he be not vitious, but on the contrary religious, beſides the divine aid that is engaged for his relief, the circumſtances he is ſtated in are apt motives to ſtir up bowels of compaſſion towards ſuch a perſon.

Unleſs the Magiſtrate, who is inveſted with Supream Power and Authority, imitate God in goodneſs as well as in greatneſs,

neſs, his Authority will produce fear rather than love. The very Moraliſt could ſay, *Sine bonitate nulla majeſtas.* Thoſe who will be at the pains to conſult Experience, ſhall finde that good Princes have always been in the greateſt eſteem; and ſure it is the moſt unpardonable villany to attempt any evil againſt religious Kings.

Holineſs is alſo profitable for Subjects to teach them obedience, and to ſubmit, not merely upon the account of wrath, but for Conſcience ſake; which is certainly the onely ſafe expedient to ſecure the obedience of Subjects: And, I confeſs, I know not how that man can be a true Subject to his earthly Prince, who ſtands not to offend the God of Heaven. I know ſome who have pretended to much Holineſs, have been the greateſt villains; but this proves not that the rule of Holineſs gives a Superſedeas or allowance to any to diſobey Authority.

Art thou *a Parent?* the rule of Holineſs (to which holy men conform) will inſtruct thee to be gentle and tender to thy Children, and not to *provoke them to wrath*, which is the onely thing that leſſens their affection. Art thou *a Childe?* it will teach thee to reverence and honour

nour thy parents; in doing of which, thou entitleſt thy ſelf to the promiſe annexed to the fifth Commandment. In a word, it is profitable to make all manner of Relations live in quietneſs and peace, and to beſtow mutual offices of love upon each other. It inſtructs men to be faithful in every calling and employment: and certainly the good man is to be truſted far rather than the wicked; for Religion lays an awe and reſtraint upon the one, but the other pretends no ſuch motive to engage him to fidelity, eſpecially if he may deceive and not be noticed. To this purpoſe *Plutarch* hath a notable ſaying: *Pietate* (ſaith he; *Nat. Deor.* lib. 1.) *ſublatâ fides etiam & Societas humanæ generis, & una excellentiſſima virtus juſtitia tollitur.*

There are ſeveral things uſeful for ſome men, but altogether unprofitable for others; but Holineſs is equally profitable for all; there are none exempt from taſting its utility, but thoſe who exclude themſelves by a vitious converſation.

Secondly, Holineſs is attended with all outward bleſſings, and wants not a claim to a temporal felicity, *Matth.* 6. 33. *Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, and all other things ſhall be added*

ded unto you. The promiſe of inheriting the Earth (by which all temporal felicity is meant) is made to the meek: *Matth.* 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the meek; for they ſhall inherit the earth.* And indeed, we finde this bleſſing even promiſed to the poſterity of thoſe that fear the Lord, *Pſal.* 25. 13. And to put this beyond all doubt, we finde the Pſalmiſt repeating this five times in one Pſalm, *Pſal.* 37. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34. And the great Apoſtle tells us, that it is *Godlineſs* that *hath the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. 4. 8. The God of Heaven hath alſo aſſured us, that he will *withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly.* Upon this account well might Wiſdom ſay, *Prov.* 8. 18. *Riches and honour are with me:* a plain inſtance of which, we have in *Solomon*, who becauſe of his aſking Wiſdom to govern his Subjects, when he might as freely have aſk'd Riches and Honour, he receives this anſwer from God, *I have alſo given thee both riches and honour,* 1 King. 3. 13.

But however this diſcriminating providence doth not ſo diſcernedly appear here, yet there is no man but can atteſt Vice hath impoveriſhed thouſands; there being ſeveral ſins that have a natural ten-

dency to poverty. *By means of a whoriſh woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread*, Prov. 6. 26. The like we may truely enough ſay of ſeveral other ſins. *I have ſeen* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *the wicked great in power, and ſpreading himſelf like a green bay-tree; yet he paſſed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I ſought him, but he could not be found*, Pſal. 37. 35, 36. I confeſs, good men may be reduced to great wants, may be deſtitute of neceſſary proviſions; nay, how frequently is this the lot of the moſt excellent and gallant Souls? yet this may be ſafely ſaid, *That a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.*

But then thoſe things that beſt deſerve the name of riches, becauſe of their enriching the Soul, which being more excellent than the Body, muſt upon that account be of greater value than theſe things that onely reſpect the Body, theſe are onely peculiar to holy men: and ſuch are the graces of the Holy Spirit, the combination of Chriſtian vertues, the price of which is above that of Rubies. Theſe are riches which are of a more laſting nature than thoſe which the ignoble of the world call riches; they are not ſubject to the caſualties which Gold and

and Silver and precious Stones are; which upon that account cannot be called a mans own, as Pagan Moraliſts have largely and excellently confirmed: And if we will not diſpute with God, and conteſt his determination, we ſhall finde one ſingle vertue receiving a more ample commendation than ever riches did; 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. *The ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit is in the ſight of God of great price.*

Although the holy and devout Soul may be reduced to our Saviours ſtraits, *not to have where to lay his head*; yet how can he be ſaid to be poor, ſince he poſſeſſes him who is All? The moſt adverſe chances that befal ſuch a Soul, cannot denominate it poor; there is a Crown and Princely Inheritance which belongs to it. Nay, beſides that glorious reverſion, we have expreſs promiſes that ſuch Souls ſhall not be altogether deſtitute of neceſſaries to ſuſtain and ſupport them in this their pilgrimage.

I have already ſhewed, that Honour and Pleaſures are the attendants of Holineſs: What in the world is more glorious, than for a man to conquer thoſe luſts and inordinate appetites that ſeek the maſtery over him? what pleaſure is able to con-

teſt with thoſe raviſhing joys which reſult from a holy converſation? There is nothing imaginable that ſo exhilarates and revives men, as a calm and quiet Conſcience. But I paſs this.

In the next place I come to ſhew, that the enjoyment of all other bleſſings can never profit that man that wants Holineſs. This is plainly atteſted by our Saviour, ſaying, *What hath a man profited if he ſhould gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?* To have an affluence of temporal mercies, cannot ſo much as contribute to a preſent felicity, where the forementioned qualification is lacking. Outward favours, not attended and chained with real Holineſs, contribute onely to enhance the miſery of their poſſeſſor; they being proper fewel to increaſe the flame of inquietude and reſtleſneſs, but unfit to allay it. The greateſt plenty of riches cannot ſatisfie the covetous minde, which like the Grave cries, *Give, give.* The whole world could not ſatisfie *Alexander*'s inſatiable ambition; but, as the Poet ſpeaks,

Æſtuat infœlix anguſto limite mundi.

'*Tis* indeed impoſſible for a man to enjoy

joy that earthly felicity he deſigns, if he want Holineſs: For, ſuppoſe he be poſſeſſed of it, yet the ſecret acknowledgement of a ſuperiour power, impairs the delights that do ariſe from ſuch a ſtate, and makes him in the height of his fancied felicity ſtartle and quake. Conſcience, upon the apprehenſion of guilt, and the vengeance due to it, recoils upon the ſinner, and diſturbs his quiet enjoyment of the pleaſures he might otherwiſe freely enough delight in. O how does it moleſt and torment him

Nocte dieque ſuum geſtare in pectore teſtem.

to have an inward principle of Fear haunting the ſinner in his moſt retired enjoyment of pleaſures, which cannot be ſilenced by his utmoſt endeavours! This, this is it that torments him with anguiſh and confuſion, that allays the imaginary pleaſure of the moſt charming Luſt, and *in the midſt of laughter makes his heart heavy:* which fully verifies the truth of what I ſaid; that the enjoyment of all other bleſſings can never free a man from torment, nor a whit profit him that is deſtitute of Holineſs.

Fourthly, Holineſs is the moſt incom-

parable bleſſing, and frees the Soul from the worſt of evils. What *David* ſaid of *Goliahs* Sword, I may more ſafely ſay of Holineſs, *There is none like it*; nothing in the world ſo apt to remove thoſe diſaſters and turmoiling fears that inwardly work upon and damp the mindes of men with ſevere checks and laſhes, as Holineſs, which being diametrically oppoſite to ſin, which is the worſt of evils, muſt therefore by a neceſſary conſequence be the beſt of bleſſings.

Now ſeeing contraries placed near to other are the more diſcernable, I ſhall therefore take a ſhort view of the evil and malignity of ſin, that hereby the beauty and excellency of Holineſs may appear the brighter, and have the greater force to conquer our affections.

To expreſs the evil and malignity of ſin, Scripture repreſents it by the moſt ugly and abominable things, by the moſt dangerous and terrible Diſeaſes: Nay, the great Apoſtle ſeems to want language and compariſons too, to expreſs the evil of it, when he calls it *exceedingly evil*, as if he had ſaid, it infinitely tranſcends all other evils; the malignity of which, no Pen can fully delineate and deſcribe, either in its nature or conſequences.

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In its *Nature*; the Scripture-character of it is, it is *an enmity againſt God*; a *tranſgreſſion* and voluntary violation of his moſt holy and righteous Law; a diſobedience of his Authority, and a wicked contempt of all the divine Attributes: 'tis the woful ſtain and blemiſh of our Natures, the diſeaſe of our Souls, and the reproach of our Reaſon.

The conſequences of ſin are fearful and fatal. So bad a cauſe can never fail to produce the worſt effects; for beſides all the temporal calamities and miſchiefs that befal Mankinde, thoſe unſpeakable miſeries and extream torments that accompany men to the other world, are alſo the dreadful and ſad effects of ſin. I have already ſhewed, that every vice is naturally attended with ſome particular puniſhment: but that indeed which is moſt terrible, which ſhould mightily amaze and ſtartle the ſinner, are the dreadful miſeries of another world: Alas! how diſmal is the condition of thoſe men who have loſt the divine Image, and conſequently his love and favour, and are liable to his fury and wrath? who are poſſeſs'd with a *legion* of impure luſts, which lead them captive, and hurry them headlong to perdition, where they muſt

have their everlaſting abode with impure ſpirits and devouring flames.

How impoſſible is it to give a juſt Liſt and Catalogue of the ſad and dreadful conſequences of ſin, or fully deſcribe the evil and malignity of it! But yet this imperfect glance may in part ſatisfie and inform us, that a holy and vertuous life, which excludes all thoſe miſchiefs and inconveniencies which both in this and the next life attend ſin, is the beſt of bleſſings, and frees us from the worſt of evils.

Fifthly, Holineſs is the beſt evidence of our being in *favour* with God, and of our *adoption* to Gods Family. How ſedulous and inquiſitive are many good Chriſtians to underſtand their ſpiritual ſtate and condition, that they may know into which of the two regions of the other world they ſhall be ſtated after death? This is certainly a matter of the greateſt conſequence, and deſerves every mans moſt ſerious conſideration; a miſtake here being ſo exceedingly dangerous, like a wound in the vital parts, it proves mortal and incurable if continued in. Now the moſt infallible mark and character of our being in favour with God, and that which comprehends all others, is that which

which the beloved Apoſtle ſets down, 1 *Joh.* 3. 7, 8, 9, 10. *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteouſneſs is righteous. (And every one that doth righteouſneſs is born of God,* Chap. 2. 29.) *He that committeth ſin is of the Devil--- Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin---- In this the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the Devil: Whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs, is not of God.* Let men pretend what they will, if they be deſtitute of righteouſneſs, they are of their Father the Devil, and can claim no intereſt in God as their Father; ſeeing it is purity of Spirit that gives us a title to be the Children of the moſt high; 2 *Cor.* 6. 17, 18. *Be ye ſeparate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.* The whole tenour of the Scripture abounds with ſo many ſuch inſtances, that I ſhall ſuperſede a tedious citation of texts.

This then being ſo infallible and certain a character, methinks every rational man may quickly come to the knowledge of his ſpiritual eſtate. A bad man may certainly enough know whether he breaks the divine Laws, and goes in a continued courſe

courſe of ſin; and a good man may ſufficiently know whether he obeys the divine Laws, and is ſincere in his actions. Theſe are things ſo plain and undeniable, that all doubts of this kinde are ridiculous. Now 'tis no difficulty to draw theſe plain inferences: *I break the divine Laws*, therefore *I am not of God:* or, *I obey them*, therefore *I am a Childe of God.* And this every conſidering man, who impartially conſiders, and exactly examines his life and actions, may be fully enough aſcertained whether he be a Childe of God or not. Alas! how uſeleſs and dangerous is it to aſcend unto Heaven to ſearch the ſecret and eternal Decrees of God, which belong not to us to pry into, that we may know whether our Names be written in the Book of Life or not? He that doth righteouſneſs needs not fear any latent Decree concerning his reprobation; and it is the vaineſt thing imaginable, for impenitent and obſtinate ſinners to dream that God hath from eternity elected them to life. The pure nature of God is ſo perfectly oppoſite to ſin, that it is quite impoſſible there can be any agreement betwixt him and ſinners, no more than there can be betwixt light and darkneſs. The Pſalmiſt acquaints us, *That he is not*

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a God that hath pleaſure in wickedneſs. And the Apoſtle hath told us, *That the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men.* But yet *the righteous Lord loveth the righteous:* Theſe are the men whom he eſteems his Children, to whom the promiſes of eternal life belong.

In the laſt place, there is nothing in the world that will prove ſo effectual to comfort men at the hour of death, as the ſweet thoughts of their being ſeparated from the pollutions of the world. How unſpeakably comfortable is it for men, when they are juſt ſtepping into the other world, to reflect upon the good life they have led, and that they carry in their boſoms Conſciences void of offence both toward God and towards man? This is indeed that noble and Sovereign Cordial that revives the ſpirits of good men, *in their paſſage through the valley and ſhadow of death*, and makes their comforts abound and overflow.

Death is not ſo ſmall a matter as ſome men think; in Scripture it is not unfitly called *the King of terrours:* Now nothing can free men from the terrour of it, but a good Conſcience; and this cannot be

be had without Holineſs, which makes all calm and ſerene within. It will afford men little pleaſure when they come to die, to reflect upon the earthly pleaſures they have enjoyed: theſe things profit not *in the day of wrath*; but the Conſcience of well doing makes men ſalute death without dread and aſtoniſhment, and lift up their heads with joy, becauſe *the day of their redemption approacheth.*

But with the ungodly and wicked it is not ſo; then their ſins ſtare them in their face, and ſo terrifie and affright them, that no wonder though in the extremity of their agony they prefer ſtrangling and death to life. If holy *Job* doth ſo heavily complain of the terrours of God, how much more terrifying ſhall the apprehenſions of a ſevere and terrible judgement be to the unſanctified and polluted? To think how ſhortly he muſt be everlaſtingly ſeparate from the good things he enjoyed here, and be caſt into utter darkneſs, to have his portion with the damned in devouring Flames, to be an everlaſting reſident in the Lake of fire and brimſtone, where he ſhall be continually tormented with that gnawing worm that never dies: Theſe are the amazing thoughts that

that will ſeize upon the ſinner: his Conſcience then will not ſleep; nothing will be able to allay thoſe Storms and Tempeſts that are raiſed by the fearful expectation of the reward due to ſin. At death, men are generally wiſer than at other times; then they begin to conſider what they have been doing, and call themſelves fool a thouſand times for their diſobedience and wickedneſs. The ſmoak of worldly cares that formerly blinded their eyes, are now diſpelled; they ſee their folly, when it is too late to mend it; and if they do no more, yet *Balaam*-like, they will cry, *O that I might die the death of the righteous!*

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Frivolous Cavils and Objections removed.

THe former Chapters having diſcovered the *Beauty of Holineſs*, and the mighty power and force of Arguments that excite to the practice of it; one who weighs all this by the meaſures of equity, cannot (as any man would think) but look upon it as the ſtrangeſt prodigie, that ſo juſt a Cauſe ſhould miſs of its effect, and finde the ſons of men, who pretend to be ſuch Maſters of Reaſon, ſo monſtrouſly fooliſh in rejecting it upon the account of ſome frivolous and very fallacious cavils: But the truth is, reſolute Impiety is ſet upon the bench and made Judge; and no wonder though it paſs an unjuſt ſentence, and condemn Holineſs becauſe of its oppoſition to Vice.

The common imputations and prejudices which wicked men load Holineſs with, I ſhall reduce to the four following Heads. *Firſt*, Holineſs lays upon men heavy burdens, and grievous to be born, which makes humane life joyleſs and uneaſie, they being ſo inconſiſtent, firſt, with Peace;

Peace; and ſecondly, with Pleaſure and Satisfaction.

Secondly, Experience informs us, that wicked men enjoy pleaſure and ſatisfaction in their ways, there being no men ſo jovial and merry as they; and that men who pretend to Holineſs are ſullen and melancholy, and are expoſed to heavy ſufferings and trials.

Thirdly, 'Tis ſingularity and ambition that prevail more with men than any other motive to be holy.

Fourthly, 'Tis the greateſt piece of folly, ignorance, and impudence, for men to quit with preſent pleaſures for mere uncertainties.

The firſt being the moſt material Objection, I ſhall therefore more largely and diſtinctly examine it; and in doing of this, I ſhall deſire theſe four things may be conſidered. *Firſt*, that the divine Laws are not grievous and uneaſie. *Secondly*, that Vice is much more troubleſom and difficult than Vertue. *Thirdly*, that Holineſs conduceth both to the Peace and Happineſs of humane Societies, and to the temporal Advantage of private perſons. And *Fourthly*, that there is a great deal of more pleaſure in the ways of Holineſs, than in the commiſſion of ſin.

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That the divine Laws are not grievous and uneaſie, but extreamly reaſonable and wiſe, is a truth I have already made plain, when I diſcourſed of *the rule of Holineſs*. The whole tenour of the Laws of Chriſtianity being ſo exceedingly ſuitable to the very nature of men, it cannot be rationally ſuppoſed that they can be grievous to them. St. *Paul* to the *Philippians*, gives us a brief and compendious, but very full and comprehenſive, account of what things the Laws of our Chriſtianity enjoyn, *viz. Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, and whatſoever things are of good report*: all which are ſo agreeable to Reaſon, that even the light of Nature prompts men to the doing of them, and fully diſcovers it ſelf to be an irreconcilable Enemy to all kinde of vices.

'*Tis* not then Reaſon, but the impetuous Luſts of men, that determines a holy Law to be grievous and uneaſie: and indeed, no wonder though this unjuſt Judge make Holineſs appear formidable, and repreſent it as grievous to Mankinde; it being ſo much the intereſt of this partial Judge to condemn it as criminal, and

and to decrie it as a yoak intolerable and grievous to be born. 'Tis not probable that the moſt innocent ſhall paſs uncondemned, when an Enemy is ſet up in the Judgement-ſeat to paſs Sentence: our bleſſed *Saviour* muſt be pronounced guilty by *Pilat*, although even this unjuſt Judge openly profeſt, *he found no fault in him.* And ſeeing our great Law-giver met with ſo ſevere a ſentence, who can expect any more upright verdicts ſhould paſs upon his Laws?

But that the divine Laws are not indeed grievous to be born, may eaſily appear from plain Texts of Scripture (which is the onely infallible rule.) Our great Lord hath himſelf taught his Diſciples, *That his yoak is eaſie, and his burden light.* And one of his inſpired Diſciples has aſſured us, *that his commands are not grievous:* two Texts ſufficient methinks to remove all thoſe prejudices that are caſt upon a holy life, as if it were full of fatigue and trouble.

But beſides Scripture, Reaſon and Experience too, come in to witneſs this truth. *Firſt*, *Reaſon* bears witneſs that the divine Commands are extreamly reaſonable and natural; and is it not againſt the common vote of Mankinde, to ſay, What

is natural, is uneaſie and difficult? Men who impoſe hard and grievous taſks upon others, are by all men condemned as unreaſonable; which certainly implies, that whatever is reaſonable, is not grievous and difficult. 'Tis true, ſinners, who by their many-repeated acts of diſobedience have contracted a habit of ſin, do indeed commit it with leſs trouble than thoſe who firſt engage to this Tyranny; as Slaves, who by cuſtom look upon that as eaſie, which at their firſt entrance upon ſuch a ſlavery was very difficult and grievous: And yet whatever eaſe the moſt daring ſinner may pretend is to be found in the acts of ſin, I durſt appeal to his own breaſt, whether he might not with a great deal of more eaſe, and leſs fatigue, have kept the divine Laws, than he met with in breaking of them.

I confeſs, the Laws of Chriſtianity are not natural in a ſtrict and confined ſence; but onely in ſo far as they correſpond with, and are ſuitable to, the nature of Mankinde: hence ſome ſins are ſaid to be *unnatural*; not becauſe all ſins may not adopt to themſelves that title, but becauſe upon a more peculiar and ſpecial account, all men are ſenſible that they are bruitiſh, and unbecoming any who carry

carry in their boſom a rational Soul. There is not any vice, but it infeſts and prejudges Nature. *Anger* is a degree of Madneſs, that violently tranſports men, and quite mars their inward eaſe and repoſe. *Revenge*, a more laſting and deliberate fury, preys upon the Soul where it reſides, and ſo diſtracts and hurries it with inquietude and reſtleſneſs, that nothing imaginable can be ſuppoſed a greater Enemy to Nature, how ſweet ſoever and luſcious it may ſeem to depraved nature. *Intemperance*, and *Uncleanneſs*, are ſins which debaſe Humane nature below that of beaſts, and are the cauſe of many intolerable pains and Diſeaſes, which make Humane life but an uneaſie burden. But beſides all theſe troubles, we may adde that horrour of Conſcience that haunts the ſinner with fear and aſtoniſhment. All which contribute to clear the truth of what I aſſert.

Again, Reaſon tells a man, that it cannot be grievous to him to perform that which is ſo much his intereſt and advantage. Men in their ſecular concerns finde no difficulties in any undertaking wherein their intereſt is concerned; and ſure it is mans greateſt intereſt to keep the divine Precepts, as I have already at

ſome length diſcovered. 'Tis an excellent ſaying, of as excellent an Author: *Reaſon* (ſays he) *muſt firſt ceaſe to be Reaſon, and commence* Phrenzie, *before 'tis poſſible it can ſet it ſelf in defiance of thoſe Laws of Chriſt, which are accommodated to its greateſt intereſt.* Cauſes of the decay of Chriſtian Piety, *Chap.* 5.

But beſides Reaſon, Experience bears alſo witneſs to this truth, that the divine Laws are not grievous. But before I proceed to prove this, I ſhall premiſe two Cautions: *Firſt*, when I ſay that Experience makes it plain, that the Laws of Chriſtianity are not grievous; I do not mean that a ſinner when he firſt forſaketh his ſins, and betakes himſelf to a holy and vertuous life, ſhall encounter with no difficulties; no ſure, this cannot reaſonably be expected: for his former habit in ſin will at the firſt give him work enough; he has an old cuſtom to oppoſe and ſtruggle with, which will coſt him no ſmall pains to overcome. *Secondly*, far leſs muſt we fondly imagine that the Law of Chriſtianity is ſo eaſie, as ſuperſedes and gives a diſcharge to humane induſtry, vigilancy, and care: they are but ſtrangers to a holy life, and never knew what it is to obey Gods Com-

Commands, who never were at any pains, nay who are not very induſtrious and careful to obſerve them. When our Saviour ſays, *his yoak is eaſie*, he does not hereby intend to perſwade men to be like *Solomons* ſluggard; ſure Heaven was never deſigned for loiterers in Gods Vineyard: but his intént there, is to remove a common prejudice men were like to entertain againſt Chriſtianity, as if it were an intolerable yoak, and inſupportable taſk: now this Chriſt forewarns his Diſciples is not true.

Theſe two things being premiſed, I now appeal to Experience (which often corrects errour in ſpeculation) whether the Laws of Heaven or Hell are moſt grievous. And to condeſcend as far as poſſible, I ſhall not here call in the Experiences of good men, who all unanimouſly aſſent that there is more eaſe and leſs fatigue in obeying, than in breaking the divine Laws; but I ſhall ſubmit to the ſinners own teſtimony, when he is in his moſt ſober ſtate; I mean, when he is under the extremity of ſome pain inflicted by his ſins, or when he lies upon his death-bed: at other times, when he is in the purſute of ſome Luſt, no wonder though he paſs as unjuſt a ſentence as ſick

men do of taſtes, who having their palates infected with ſome venomous and filthy humor, judge every thing, be it really never ſo pleaſant, to be bitter and harſh.

Go then to ſinners when they come to themſelves (as it is ſaid of the Prodigal, *He came to himſelf*, as if he had been before mad or diſtracted) and aſk them whether they finde more trouble in their doing or omitting of ſin? Aſk the Drunkard, who by his intemperance lies ſmarting under the tormenting pains of the Gout, whether he had been wiſer, and ſuffered leſs trouble, if he had been temperate, and abſtained from exceſs? Nay, beſides the diſeaſes that many, if not moſt of vices bring upon men; there are ſome ſins that make men ſenſibly in the time finde pain and trouble. Go to the Laſcivious and Wanton perſon who is tormented with the Pox, and aſk whether his ſin be grievous to him or not? There are few ſins which are not attended with grievous concomitants. But I ſhall not inſiſt.

I confeß, no mens Experiences are ſo likely to demonſtrate this truth, nor are more pertinently appealed to, as theirs who have once experimented the pleaſures

ſures and pains of both ſtates: Aſk therefore thoſe who were once Drunkards and Adulterers, but are now ſanctified and ſettled in a courſe of Holineſs; and I am ſure they ſhall verily teſtifie, that it is onely Satan's Yoak that is uneaſie and burthenſome.

But granting that there is ſome difficulty in the exact obſervation of the Laws of Chriſtianity, (as ſure any man who conſults the corruption of his own nature, and the depraved inclinations thereof, againſt which they are levelled, will never deny) yet if this ſhall be judged a good Argument to cancel the Laws of Chriſtianity, all Laws whatſoever ſhall be quite daſhed out, and baniſhed the world; for who ſhall be guilty, if he may have the liberty to uſe this for a relevant excuſe?

This being then ſo unreaſonable to imagine, (and if it ſhould be admitted, ſhould yet never a whit excuſe the ſinner, who to his experience findes ſin to be ſo uneaſie and troubleſome) yet I ſhall adde two Conſiderations that demonſtrate, the Laws of Chriſtianity are more eaſie than any other Laws that ever were invented; and that they are not (as carnal men repreſent them) *hard ſayings*

which none can bear. Firſt, the Author of the Goſpel-precepts hath offered to us an aſſiſtance, able to conquer all the difficulties that can be ſuppoſed to attend the keeping of his Mandates. 'Tis true, if Chriſt had enjoyned his followers to obey a Law which could not poſſibly be kept; I confeſs, in that caſe, his Commands had been grievous, and his Yoak inſupportable: Or if he had been ſatisfied with no leſs than perfect innocency, and unſinning obedience, I don't ſee how this prejudice and cavil could have been removed. But he who preſcribed thoſe Precepts, conſidered the frailties of our nature, and the weakneſs of man in this lapſed eſtate; and therefore he has provided help for us, if we will but be at the pains ſeriouſly to implore it; *For he giveth his Spirit to them that ask it.* And upon this account the beloved Apoſtle encourageth Chriſtians to obey the precepts of the Goſpel, becauſe, *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

Secondly, The excellency of the Reward that is promiſed to the obedient, is a moſt noble conſideration to make men (as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks) run the way of Gods Commandments. The promiſſory part

part of the Goſpel, renders the preceptive part eaſie. Methinks the holy Soul ſhould with comfort thus expreſs it ſelf, when the greateſt difficulties offer: Good God! ſhall I be diſcouraged to obey the hardeſt (if any thing proceeding from infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs can be ſaid to be difficult) of thy Commandments, when ſo glorious a prize is the reward thereof? If a terrene and temporal felicity animates others to encounter the moſt Giant-difficulties, how much more unconcernedly ſhould I ſlight all hazards, and contemn by a fearleſs courage all dangers, for that *bleſſed hope that is ſet before me?* Can I remember there is a Kingdom promiſed, and yet be terrified from it by ſuppoſed difficulties, or complain that the way is inacceſſible? Do I really know that it is indeed a good Land, and am yet diſcouraged to attempt the taking of it, becauſe it will require ſome violence? Shall I, like the *Reubenites* and *Gadites*, ſet up my reſt on this ſide of *Jordan*, notwithſtanding this propoſal of *Canaan?* No ſure, eternal Life is too noble a prize to be loſt, for fear of fighting the Good fight. I regard no difficulties while I eye the Crown; I cannot think thoſe Precepts grievous, that

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are enforced by ſo many excellent promiſes. So great a recompence of reward ſhould, methinks, inſpire the dulleſt Heart, and ſweeten the hardeſt Service; ſhould make any one willing and content to ſacrifice his moſt beloved luſts, to cut off the right Hand, and pluck out the right eye, which ſtand in the way, and hinder him from entring into Heaven.

Having thus endeavoured to explain upon what account the Laws of Chriſtianity are not grievous, I hope I ſhall not need to inſiſt long upon the following particulars. At firſt ſight it ſeems plain, that ſince the caſe is ſo, Vice muſt certainly be more troubleſome than Vertue; and that it is eaſier for men to live holily, than wickedly: and yet, I know not by what ſtrange artifice, Holineſs has had the bad luck to be repreſented as being extreamly difficult. I confeſs, I intend not to inveigh againſt the ſacred Tribe of *Levi*, who have repreſented Heaven almoſt as unacceſſible, as the Iſraelitiſh *Spies* did the good Land of *Canaan*; knowing they thereby onely deſigne to raiſe mens endeavours: although I could have wiſhed that they had conſidered better, how readily men of corrupt

rupt mindes and vitious practices lay aſide all care of Gods Commandments, upon this ſuggeſtion, that they are grievous; and are deterred from a holy and vertuous life.

But that Vice is more troubleſome and uneaſie than Vertue, will (beſides what I have formerly ſaid) appear to be ſo, from the following Conſiderations. *Firſt*, Sacred Records repreſent ſinners as men who *weary themſelves with ſin*; and the Prophet *Iſaiah* deſcribes their trouble by a very apt ſimilitude, *Iſa.* 57. 20. *The wicked is like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.* The ways of ſin are frequently called *crooked paths*, and wicked men are ſaid *to walk aſtray*; whileas the way of Holineſs and Vertue is ſaid to be a *ſtreight* and *high way*: All which Phraſes plainly enough imply, that the former is full of intricacy and perplexities, and the latter plain and eaſie.

Experiences to prove this, are every day ſo multiplied, that they may abundantly ſerve to ſilence all doubts. The *Drunkard* can experimentally tell the coſtlineſs of his ſin, and the tormenting diſeaſes that are frequently the effect of an overcharged Stomach; the uneaſie belchings

belchings and overturnings within, the grievous pains of Head and Joynts. The *Wanton* and *Laſcivious* can produce his painful boils and ſores, to witneſs the uneaſineſs of Luſt; at beſt, he can onely produce an hectick Body. But beſides thoſe loathſome diſeaſes that are the effects of Laſciviouſneſs, how reſtleſs and uneaſie is the condition of ſuch perſons? But how impoſſible is it to give a juſt liſt of thoſe miſeries that Wantonneſs and Intemperance hurry men to? To what a multitude of amazing difficulties does *Pride* expoſe men! what miſchiefs, jarrs and conteſts does it raiſe? *Envy* and *Revenge* torment mens ſpirits, and ſo diſquiet and perturb them, that men may as well take fire into their boſom, and pretend they perceive no torment, as lodge thoſe horrid luſts in their breaſts without the ſenſe of their extream miſery and pain. The *Covetous* minde is never at reſt, but is ever craving and deſirous of more. But to ſhew how troubleſome the practice of every ſin is, requires a larger diſcourſe than I can well allow.

But how eaſie is Vertue, if compared with Vice? At what trouble and pains are men, to invent a lie? and when they have contrived it, they cannot but be afraid

afraid leſt it be diſcovered. But how eaſie is it to ſpeak the truth? With how much art and pains do men trouble themſelves to conceal their vices? The Adulterer is wearied with watching convenient opportunities, and afraid leſt he be diſcovered; whileas the chaſt perſon enjoys himſelf quietly, & is troubled with no ſuch attender. The *covetous Miſer* is cruciate and tormented with a deſire of what he cannot expect; is extreamly tormented by an inceſſant care, leſt he loſe what he hath, and ever toiling to acquire more; whileas the vertuous Soul is contented with what he enjoyeth, and grudgeth not to beſtow a part of what is his to others.

There is no man who is not quite given up to commit all manner of wickedneſs, and whoſe conſcience is not ſeared as with a hot Iron, but can tell by his experience, how perplexing and uneaſie Vice is. And to make this yet more plain, I ſhall adde theſe few following Reaſons. *Firſt*, the nature of Vice is ſo reproachful, that men are even troubled to coyn ſhifts to avoid the owning it; and ſure this cannot but be uneaſie to men. *Secondly*, the moſt viciouſly inclined perſons, who will not practiſe, yet are forced for their intereſt

reſt to pretend Vertue, and uſually indeed become greater Zealots than thoſe who are really vertuous: But this cannot but be exceedingly troubleſome to them, it being againſt their inclinations, and contradictory to the internal ſentiments of their mindes. And beſides, at what pains are they to make other men believe that they are real in what they onely pretend? *Thirdly*, Vice is very perplexing and difficult, upon the account that it requires hard, if not impoſſible performances: the Covetous minde is prompted to attempt many difficulties to obtain what it craves, and after all is diſappointed. Nay, indeed, Covetouſneſs is a vice ſo uneaſie and troubleſome, that it propoſeth what can never be acquired: for after it hath got what is deſigned, it is reſtleſs, and as ready to ſay *Give, give*, as ever. But *Laſtly*, that which contributes moſt to render Vice uneaſie, are thoſe after-pangs of Conſcience which fill the Soul with horrour and amazement; the conſciouſneſs of guilt ſtings and torments it, and makes the ſinner a terrour to himſelf. 'Tis impoſſible either to *gag* or corrupt Conſcience, that it ſhall never give any check. But now how quieting and ſolacing is Vertue? no man ever yet complained that

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terrours haunted him for living holily. O how do the thoughts of a vertuous life refreſh men in the midſt of greateſt dangers? Let us go to ſinners on their death-bed, and then we ſhall finde this truth preached to the full; an evidence valid enough to condemn ſin as the uneaſieſt thing imaginable.

And thus we have ſeen how many difficulties attend ſin, both before, and after it is committed. And now what reaſon can any man alleadge for the pretended eaſineſs of ſin? I confeſs, I know not any thing, except it be *cuſtom*, that can be pertinently adduced; but how weak is this Plea? for although Cuſtom, which is a ſecond nature, may contribute very much to ſtupifie the Judgement, and harden the Conſcience, and ſo conſequently make Vice the more eaſie; yet we can hardly ſuppoſe that ever Humane nature will ſo far aſſimilate the nature of mere Animals, as to be deprived of Reaſon and Conſcience: And ſure, ſo long as any of theſe remain, Vice muſt needs meet with oppoſition. But *Secondly*, if men will compare the eaſineſs of Vertue and Vice, they muſt put them in equal circumſtances; and then I doubt not but Vice ſhall ſtand condemned, as the great troubler

troubler of peace and quietneſs. For inſtance, let us ſuppoſe that a man is accuſtomed to a holy life, and is habituate to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; in this caſe, let any man make but the experiment, and I am ſure he ſhall ingenuouſly acknowledge, that a good life affords more tranquillity and peace, than Vice dares lay claim to.

And yet, I know not by what bad luck, Holineſs has been repreſented as oppoſite to mens preſent welfare, and hurtful to their peace and tranquillity. How groundleſs this prejudice is, I have already endeavoured to ſhew. I ſhall therefore now onely in a few words make it plain, that Holineſs is the moſt effectual method that can be taken, to exalt the publick peace and happineſs of a Nation. And *Secondly*, that it infinitely conduceth to the happineſs, peace, and tranquillity of particular perſons; and that nothing is ſo inconſiſtent with, and hurtful to both, as ſin.

How much Holineſs tends to the advancement of publick peace in a Kingdom and Nation, appears very plainly from the Wiſe mans obſervation, *Prov.* 14. 34. *Righteouſneſs exalteth a nation; but ſin is the reproach of any people.* And the

the Apoſtle St. *James* gives us a true account of the cauſes of publick jars, *Jam.* 4. 1. *From whence come wars and fightings amongſt you? are they not hence, even from your luſts that war in your members?* If mankinde had not corrupted their ways, and degenerated from their priſtine purity, how peaceable and happy had humane ſocieties been? but in this lapſed ſtate, Ambition, Pride, and Injuſtice act their tragical parts, and ſo tend to the deſtruction of humane ſocieties, that if there did not remain ſome ſparks and remainders of Religion, 'tis not poſſible that humane ſociety could evite an utter ruine. And he that well ponders the ſettled courſe of divine Providence, ſhall eaſily aſſent, that in all Ages Righteouſneſs and Vertue have been rewarded with a temporal tranquillity and happineſs; and that *fruitful lands have been turned into barrenneſs, for the wickedneſs of them that dwell therein.* And indeed 'tis very reaſonable to think that the divine Juſtice will reward a righteous Nation, and puniſh a rebellious People. 'Tis true, he may defer his Judgements for a while, yet his Juſtice will not always give place to mercy and forbearance; but a Nation that conti-

nueth and increaſeth its provocations, muſt expect to be puniſhed in this world, (which is the onely proper place) as a righteous Land may expect a preſent reward.

That Holineſs doth alſo conduce to the peace and quietneſs of particular perſons, is nothing leſs evident from Scripture: *Pſal.* 119. 165. *Great peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them:* but *the wicked is like the troubled ſea when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt*, Iſa. 57. 20. I have once and again ſhewed, that there can be no inward tranquillity and peace, where Holineſs is wanting: the very thoughts of God, which above all things are moſt ſweet, are notwithſtanding troubleſome to wicked men. But becauſe Humane nature is in this degenerate ſtate extreamly ſunk down into Senſe, and more apt to be wrought upon by temporal advantages, than what onely concern the Soul, and have a proſpect to things that are future; I have alſo in the former part of this Diſcourſe endeavoured to make plain, how advantageous Holineſs is upon the foreſaid account; and *that length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour:* That *her ways*

ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths peace: That *Godlineſs is great gain, having the promiſes of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.* And indeed, any man, who conſiders the nature and reaſon of the thing, cannot but be inclined to think it muſt be ſo: For how can that man be expoſed to trouble and diſquietment, who hath gotten the maſtery over his Paſſions? And I dare appeal to the ſinners own experience, whether vices have not been prejudicial to his health, macerated his Body, and filled him with tortures and pains? whether ſome ſins have not brought him to poverty and diſgrace, ruined both his eſtate and fame? Can any man produce any good effect that ever ſin cauſed? ſure, if men would ſpeak impartially, they ſhould acknowledge all this to be true.

That there is a great deal of more pleaſure in the ways of Holineſs than in the commiſſion of ſin, (which is the fourth thing propoſed to be conſidered) needs not puzzle any man to prove it. How delightful are all acts of Piety and Vertue? how unexpreſſible is that comfort that the devout Soul findes in converſing with God? Well might the Pſalmiſt ſay, *Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs*

neſs for the upright in heart, Pſal. 97. 11. he often experienced that ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction that is the reſult of obedience; whileas *Solomon*, who could paſs the beſt verdict of ſenſual pleaſures, yet concludes them to be but *vanity and vexation of ſpirit.*

There be two things that allay the pleaſures of ſin: *Firſt*, the unrulineſs of immoderate paſſions, which fret and vex the mindes of men, and hinder the ſinner from taſting its pleaſure. *Secondly*, the fear of an inviſible being, armed to puniſh them for their miſdemeanors: Conſcience, upon the apprehenſion of guilt, recoils upon the ſinner, and mars all the pleaſure he promiſed himſelf to enjoy: This made *Belſhazzer*, a King, and environed with his Nobles, tremble and quake in the midſt of his cups. But ſuppoſing vices did bring as much pleaſure along with them as they pretend, yet upon two accounts they are not half ſo delicious as the pleaſures that ſpring from a good life. *Firſt*, the pleaſures of ſin are ſo interrupted, of a ſhort duration, or, as the Apoſtle expreſſeth them, they are but *for a ſeaſon*: how quickly will a period be put to all theſe pleaſures, which now make ſo much noiſe? They are very fitly compared

compared by *Solomon*, to *the crackling of thorns under a pot*, which are ſcarce ſooner in a blaze, than they vaniſh; but the joys that ſpring from a good converſation, are at their loweſt ebb here: they do indeed continue, *for no man taketh away this joy*; but Heaven is the deſigned place for the good Soul to feed upon thoſe *Rivers of pleaſures that are at God's right hand for evermore. Secondly*, ſenſual pleaſures do ſoon cloy mens appetites: we cannot enjoy long any ſenſual delight, but we are quickly weary of it: but it is not ſo with ſpiritual delights; 'tis onely the abſence of them, when ſuſpended for our ſins, that troubles and moleſts us. 'Tis impoſſible that ſenſual pleaſures can ſatisfie the ſoul of man, which was never framed for a Mahometan Paradiſe; nor can it be rationally expected, that he who is conſcious to himſelf of guilt, ſhould be free from fear; which being ſo tormenting, can never permit men to enjoy pleaſure freely.

But let us deſcend to ſenſual pleaſures, and we ſhall finde, that he who is temperate and moderate, is more likely to reliſh the pleaſantneſs of Meat, Drink, and Paſtime, than the intemperate and immoderate. He who relieves the Poor, and

refreſheth the Needy, cannot but finde more real ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction in doing ſo, than he who drinks away his Eſtate. He who ſpeaks the truth, findes not thoſe tormenting checks of Conſcience which are the juſt reward of lying. But all this will more plainly appear, by the Solution of the next Objection.

The ſecond Imputation is brought from Experience; namely, that wicked men are for ordinary very jovial and cheerful, and enjoy a great deal of ſatisfaction in their ways; whereas men who pretend to Piety and Holineſs, are very ſad and diſconſolate.

To this I anſwer; That the Queſtion is not whether wicked men have ſome pleaſure in their ſins, or not? but, whether that pleaſure that ariſeth from a good life, be not infinitely preferable to theſe? Alas! the moſt promiſing ſenſual pleaſure (ſuppoſing it to be lawful) is much inferiour to the ſatisfaction and comfort that ſprings from a good Conſcience. How much more inconſiderable muſt ſinful pleaſures be, which are attended with ſo black and diſmal conſequences? *Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil.* Sinful pleaſures are at the beſt but ſhort; and ſure this

this conſideration contributes very much to leſſen their value: But that which makes them ſo mean, and not worth the enjoying, is the painful Eternity that ſucceeds to them.

However then the wicked may appear jovial and merry, yet their inward thoughts (if we could diſcover them) cannot be at quiet and eaſe: Whatever pleaſure they may reap in the preſent act, yet they cannot afterwards look unto themſelves without horrour and amazement: The after-ſtings of ſin are ſo painful, that he buys thoſe preſent pleaſures at a rate no reaſonable man would purchaſe them.

But that wicked men cannot really enjoy that pleaſure and contentment they pretend to, ſeems very plain from Reaſon. For *firſt*, How can any man be ſatisfied with thoſe actions which are ſo croſs to his very nature, and oppoſite to Reaſon, as every ſin is? Can a man finde pleaſure in doing that which he knows he ought not to do? ſure the reboundings of Conſcience, upon the apprehenſion of doing amiſs, will ſoon raſe out any pleaſure that ſin affords; and a ſick man may more rationally expect reſt, than thoſe men pleaſure and contentment. *Secondly*,

ly, it can afford little pleaſure to men, to act quite contrary to their own intereſts; it is rather like the laughter of fools and mad men, than a real pleaſure, that ſuch men can pretend to. Now every ſinner quite ruines his intereſt and happineſs, while he runneth headlong to deſtruction; and for a preſent pleaſure, which is onely grateful to the ſenſual appetite, loſeth thoſe laſting Rivers of pleaſure, which, though future, are yet certain, and which are calculated for the Soul. *Thirdly*, What pleaſure can any man enjoy, who is ſure to be eternally tormented? As *there is no peace*, ſo no pleaſure *to the wicked*, who are at oddes with God, *whoſe favour is better than life.*

But what reaſon have good men to be ſad and diſconſolate, ſince all the cauſes of grief are removed from them? *Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart*; ſo that the Apoſtle had good reaſon to double that Exhortation, *Rejoyce in the Lord, again I ſay rejoyce.* O how ſatisfying and pleaſant is it for men to act reaſonably, and to be aſſured that they have done their duty, and have acted for their own intereſt! *Our rejoycing is this*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *the teſtimony of our conſciences, that in all ſimplicity*

ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we have had our converſation in the world.

Sure there was never any man who was troubled for living holily, there being no reaſon why any ſhould: 'Tis true, good men may be of a melancholy diſpoſition, and naturally inclined to ſadneſs; but this can be no reflection on Holineſs, as if it were the cauſe of that melancholy temper: nay, the beſt of men have their own failings, and no wonder though theſe breed ſome trouble and diſquiet: But this is not to be diſconſolate for being good, but for doing evil. And indeed, I may adde, that the great abominations and profanity, the contempt of Religion, and diſhonour that is done to God that abounds, may very rationally make good men with the Pſalmiſt ſay, *Rivers of tears run down my eyes, becauſe men obſerve not thy Law.*

And thus this imputation caſt upon Holineſs, is eaſily wip'd off. Grief and ſadneſs are not the effect of a good life; but of an imperfect obedience: And while our ſins call for mourning and faſting, it were a piece of madneſs for men to be jovial and merry, and entertain themſelves with thoſe deceitful melodies, which will end *in weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.*

And

And yet the ſorrow of truely good men is not ſo obvious to the eye of men, as it is to him who is *the ſearcher of the heart*; it is rather the artifice of the formal Penitent, and hypocritical Profeſſor, than the character of the Righteous, to *diſfigure their faces*, and appear ſad and demure. A good man chuſeth rather, with *David*, to mourn in ſecret, and when he appears in publick to waſh his face, than with thoſe Hypocrites of whom *Iſaiah* ſpeaks, who *bow down their head like a bull-ruſh*, who have *choſen affliction rather than innocence.*

The next imputation caſt upon Holineſs is, that it is but a piece of *ſingularity*, and a vain ambition to walk alone. *Anſ.* I am heartily ſorry that the univerſal deluge of Impiety ſhould make good men ſay as once *Elijah* did in another caſe, *I am onely left:* the few number of good men, compared with the vaſt multitude and Armies of tranſgreſſors, makes them to be eſteemed ſingular and preciſe; and brings upon them the wrath and fury of ungodly ſinners, becauſe *they will not run with them to the ſame exceſs of riot*, and wallow in the mire as they do. But truely this charge is not more rational, than if a company of mad men ſhould call

call one a ſingular fool, becauſe he does not comply with them in all their extravagant actings, which do really rather require pity and compaſſion than imitation.

I doubt not but Singularity in ſome caſes is a very intolerable temper, and unbecoming any man who pretends wiſdom: but yet, if it be univerſally condemned, and in no caſe admitted as reaſonable, I don't ſee but the charge will rebound upon the ſinner, who in this degenerate age thinks the worſe of himſelf, if he exceed not others in wickedneſs.

But ſince Holineſs is ſo conformable to Humane reaſon, ſo advantageous and beneficial to every man; what madneſs is it to condemn it as ſingular? Sure, he who intends to walk as a man who is *of a good underſtanding*, (as good men are ſaid to be) who intends to minde his intereſt and happineſs, will never be frighted from Holineſs, becauſe may be it is not in vogue, nor become the mode of the Kingdome. If a whole Kingdom (excepting a few) ſhould rebel againſt their Prince, would it be any blot upon theſe few Loyal Subjects, that they affected Singularity?

But

But this cavil is ſo inſignificant and ſilly, that I need not enlarge. Sure, ſince Holineſs is the peculiar excellency and noble embelliſhment of Humane nature; ſince it is ſo venerable and lovely, and of all perfections the moſt excellent; he muſt be degenerate to the brutal nature, who condemns Singularity in Holineſs; for this is in truth a condemning a man becauſe he is *more excellent than his neghbour*, as the righteous is ſaid to be in Scripture.

The laſt heavy Charge is, that it is folly and madneſs for men to quit with their preſent pleaſures, and expoſe themſelves to grievous troubles, for a future reward which is uncertain, and which no body ever ſaw. To this I *Anſwer*, Firſt, it is a great miſtake to think that Holineſs expoſeth men to relinquiſh temporal and ſenſual pleaſures, there being no men in the world ſo qualified to experiment the ſweetneſs of theſe, none who live in ſo happy and flouriſhing condition, who are more healthful, and enjoy a greater meaſure of peace and quietneſs, than good men. The onely inconveniency they are expoſed to, is affliction upon the account of Religion; which when Chriſtianity did commence, was no rare thing, but now is not ſo ordinary. But ſuppoſing good

good men were expoſed to greater afflictions than other men, yet there is a great deal of ſatisfaction in ſubmitting to them, ſince they are but *light afflictions*, and *momentary* too, *which work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Theſe ſmall evils are rather to be endured, than laſting pains and torments. Sure, Of two evils, the leaſt is to be choſen.

Secondly, Although the reward of Holineſs be future, yet 'tis not uncertain. We have as great aſſurance that there will be a reward for the Righteous in another world, as the nature of the thing is capable of: and ſure he is an unwiſe man that aſks any other demonſtration or proof. Now that there is a reward laid up for good men, which though unſeen, is yet as certain as if it were obvious to ſenſe, we have the greateſt rational evidence, and the beſt moral arguments to confirm it. For *firſt*, if there be a God; *ſecondly*, if the Scriptures be the Word of God, then there is not any thing more certain, than that there is a ſtate of rewards and puniſhments after this life. *Firſt*, if there be a God, then we can have no reaſonable ſcruple about the future reward: for ſince God is *holy* and *juſt* (perfections eſſential

ſential to a Deity) then certainly he will, as the great Governour of the World, reward Vertue, and puniſh Vice. But this doth not always fall out ſo here; therefore it is reaſonable to conclude, that he hath reſerved the wicked till that great day of wrath, and prepared a reward for the righteous. *Secondly*, If the Scripture be the Word of God, then he who runs may read this truth.

We have then the greateſt moral aſſurance poſſible, that there is a future reward; which may ſufficiently encourage men to hazard all they enjoy here, for the expectation of it. But I ſhall onely ſuppoſe that the future reward is poſſible; (which I think few will deny, or can prove it to be impoſſible) yet even upon this ſuppoſition, good men who part with the tranſitory things of this life, prove a great deal wiſer than thoſe who condemn them: For if there be no life after this, all the loſs a good man ſuffers, is that of temporal conveniency; he hath denied himſelf the enjoyment of ſenſual pleaſures, ſo far as he judgeth them ſinful; he is not ſo intemperate as other men, and perhaps is expoſed to ſome hazards for his Religion; at the moſt, *all* that he is to hazard is but very ſmall.

But

But if there be a future reward, in what a diſmal ſtate are the wicked, who ſhall everlaſtingly be deprived of it, and be irrecoverably plunged into a ſtate of laſting and ſevere torments?

But ſince we are aſſured of a future reward, and know certainly, that *the righteous ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun in the Kingdom of their Father*, and that the wicked *ſhall be caſt into utter darkneſs*; What folly and madneſs is it to be careful for the Body, and careleſs what becomes of the Soul; to provide for Time, and neglect Eternity? Sure 'tis no wonder though the Wiſe man does ſo frequently characterize the ſinner a *fool*, and repreſents him as one that *lacketh underſtanding*: And indeed, we may rationally ſay, *This their way is their folly*; their fooliſh choice proclaims, *that thoſe workers of iniquity have no knowledge.*

THE

The Concluſion.

WE have now ſeen the Excellency and Beauty of Holineſs, have diſcovered the abſolute Perfection of its Nature, and the Compleatneſs of its Rule; have taken a view of its Allurements and powerful Motives, and have diſcovered the weakneſs of thoſe Cavils that are urged againſt it: and what remains, but that we ſet about this work with the greateſt ſeriouſneſs imaginable; that *we give no ſleep to our eyes, nor ſlumber to our eye-lids*, till we forſake our ſins, and enter upon a courſe of Holineſs?

If God had impoſed upon us a heavy and intolerable yoak; if he had commanded us to perform ſome grievous and uneaſie ſervice, had we not been obliged to have obeyed? But ſince he onely commands us *to waſh and be clean*, requires onely our conſent to what is ſo much our own intereſt, onely exacts that we ſeparate our ſelves from thoſe luſts that pollute and defile us, that vex and torment

torments our mindes, and which (if continued in) will certainly ruine and undo us; what fools and mad men are we if we refuſe to hear his voice?

Almighty God has been drawing us with the Cords of Love; has preſented to us the moſt charming motives to excite our love and eſteem; has carried us (as it were) to the *Pinacle* of the *Temple*, and diſcovered to us *all the glory and beauty of this world*; has taken us to *Piſgah*, and given us a view of the good Land of *Canaan*, of *the City of the living God*, *of which glorious things are ſpoken*; and promiſed, that *all theſe things ſhall be ours*, if we will but *be holy in all manner of converſation:* And to excite our fear, he has opened to our view, *the powers of the world to come*; has plainly told us of the pains and torments that the damned ſuffer day and night, and that *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh*, remains as the due portion of thoſe that do evil. And now may he not take up that ſame proteſtation that he uſed to his ancient People the Jews; *What more can I do for you?* But alas! we have in the moſt inſolent manner deſpiſed all theſe charms of Love, and, like the mad man in the Goſpel, have

broken to pieces the ſtrongeſt Fetters and Chains. We are, God knows, as deeply ſunk into ſenſuality and bruitiſhneſs, as thoſe to whom *the Grace of God that bringeth ſalvation* hath never appeared. 'Tis not credible, (I may ſay poſſible) that men could have been more wicked than they now are, ſuppoſing they had never heard of Heaven or Hell.

'*Tis* a wonder (as any one would think) that thoſe very men who profeſs they believe in Chriſt, ſhould ſo groſly and openly contradict his plain Precepts; that thoſe who believe, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, and *that the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs*, yet perſiſt in their abominable wickedneſs, and are neither awed with fears, nor animated with hopes. What is all this, but for men to expoſe themſelves to the contempt rather than pity of diſcerning men?

We have ſurveyed the ſeveral advantages which attend Holineſs; have diſcovered how much mans temporal as well as his eternal welfare and happineſs depends upon it: We have explained how *in her right hand is length of days, and in her left hand are riches and honour:*

nour: that *her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths peace:* And now may we not give the ſame teſtimony of it which *Joſhua* and *Caleb* did of *Canaan*, Numb. 14. *The land which we paſſed through to ſearch, it is an exceeding good land?* The Sons of *Anak* (I mean the pretended difficulties) are not ſo ſtrong as ſome men repreſent them to be; we need not be diſcouraged to encounter with them; *greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* Alas! what Objection can men poſſibly make againſt a Duty that is ſo excellent, uſeful, and neceſſary, that is founded upon ſuch mighty motives, as may prevail with any who is not quite petrified in deſperate Impiety? Good God! what ſtupid folly is this, that men *hide their hands in their boſom*, and will not ſo much as ſtretch them out to this *tree of Life*, that they may eat of this fruit, *which is pleaſant to the eye*, and profitable both to our preſent and future happineſs.

'Tis indeed pity, that men ſhould be thus permitted to run headlong to deſtruction. Alas! is perdition ſo lovely and deſirable, that, like *Rachel*, a double ſervitude is *thought light for it?* and ſhall wiſe and diſcerning men be Eye-witneſſes

of the bad bargain thoſe men make, and not warn them of their folly? I know this is a duty chiefly incumbent to our ſpiritual Watchmen to diſcharge; I doubt not but many of them ſtand upon their watch, and warn men of their danger. It were to be wiſhed that all and every of them were thus faithful; but ſure every man is in ſome manner concerned to be *his brothers keeper*; and he is highly criminal, who ſhould ſee a mad man running upon danger, and not ſtop him in his courſe.

I wiſh ſome new-coined Doctrines had not an inauſpicious influence upon the bad practices of many, had not too much countenanced and authorized vice: but my preſent deſigne is ſo far from controverſial, that I ſhall rather think my ſelf concerned to inveigh againſt needleſs diſputes, than ſtart any. If I may ſpeak from my own experience, I ingenuouſly confeſs, I finde Diſputes ſo inſipid and fruitleſs, and in the review ſo unſatisfactory, that I am reſolved henceforth to bid an eternal adieu to them, and to condemn them as the great underminers of Chriſtian Piety: And if any ſhall after this fair warning aſſault any Doctrine I have elſewhere owned, I hope diſcerning men will

will neither eſteem me nor the Cauſe the worſe, that I draw not my Sword in its defence.

And now what ſhall I ſay more, but conclude with *Moſes*'s paſſionate Exhortation, *Deut.* 32. 46. *Set your hearts to the words which I teſtifie to you this day: for it is not a vain thing, becauſe it is your life.* Let us no longer delay and put off this duty; *while it is called to day, let us not harden our hearts through the deceitfulneſs of ſin*; but ſeriouſly *ſearch and try our ways, and turn to the Lord:* this is the proper ſeaſon for ſo neceſſary a work; ere long there will be no time left us to conſider our ways: *O that in this our day we did underſtand the things that belong to our peace, before they be hid from our eyes!* If men would but be induced to imitate the Pſalmiſts Example, *Pſal.* 119. 59. *I thought on my ways*, I doubt not but they ſhould alſo imitate the courſe he did take, *I made haſte and delayed not to keep thy commandments:* But men conſider not what they are doing, and ſo no wonder though they periſh, no wonder that they prefer darkneſs to light, and deſpiſe Holineſs as a thing of no value. Let us therefore humbly and heartily in-

invoke the Father of Lights to open the Eyes of men, whom the God of this world hath blinded, that they may *flee from the wrath to come*, by *cleanſing themſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.*

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